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## THE COMMON SENSE, PERFECTION OF THE ORDER OF PURE SENSIBILITY

### I

IN order that we may make clear the peculiar glory of the common sense and of its operation in that hierarchy which obtains among the various orders of cognitions by which things are known without their matter but with the conditions of matter, it may be well to begin with a three-fold negation.

A. The names *intellectus* and *ratio* are frequently applied to various of the internal senses to indicate something of the special character of their operation by reason of their participation in the life of reason.

1. There is the imagination or fancy, that power whose object is the things of sense divorced from reference to the here and now. In this already it is assimilated to both *ratio* and *intellectus*, which all have their operation in the absence of things of sense.[1] In this elevation to a greater degree of im-

[1] Considerandum autem est, quod sicut supra dictum est, sicut [Philosophus] sub intellectu phantasiam comprehendit, ita etiam phantasiam usque ad intellectum extendit, sequens nominis rationem. Nam phantasia apparitio quaedam est: apparet

materiality over the things of sense are gathered all the characteristics of the operations of the imagination: a) that it can recall the images of things once seen or heard, b) that it can fashion images of things never seen or heard in that way by the sense, c) that the phantasm, rather than the sense, is not a transient but an enduring principle of human knowledge [2] even as the agent intellect, *virtus* of the intellective part, is a co-principle of every intellectual operation,[3] d) that the singular material substance is presented in such wise that the judgments of mathematics terminate in the imagination, whereas the judgments of physics terminate in the sense.[4]

Nevertheless, the imagination is always denominated *intellectus* and not *ratio*.

There is not the discursiveness of *ratio*, as that name is proper to the third operation of the reason, because the imagination does not work through a manifold of sensible things in order to come to that which is its knowledge in act.

Now the second operation of the intellect, that of composing and dividing, is *intellectus* insofar as at heart it is always the simple affirmation of the exercise of an act of being, but it is

autem aliquid et secundum sensum et secundum rationem. Phantasia etiam habet suam operationem in absentia sensibilium, ut ratio et intellectus (S. Thomae, *in De An.*, III, 16, ed. Pirotta n. 837). . . . ; ita tamen quod sub intellectu phantasia comprehendatur, quae habet aliquid simile intellectui, inquantum movet ad absentiam sensibilium sicut intellectus, . . . (*op. cit.*, III, 15, n. 818).

[2] *διὸ οὐδέποτε νοεῖ ἄνευ φαντάσματος ἡ ψυχή* (Aristotelis, *De An.*, III, 8, 431a16-17). Ad quintum dicendum, quod phantasma est principium nostrae cognitionis, ut ex quo incipit intellectus operatio non sicut transiens, sed sicut permanens, ut quoddam fundamentum intellectualis operationis: sicut principia demonstrationis oportet manere in omni processu scientiae, cum phantasmata comparentur ad intellectum ut objecta, in quibus inspicit omne quod inspicit vel secundum perfectam representationem, vel secundum negationem . . . (S. Thomae, *in Boet. de Trin.*, VI, 2, ad 5, ed. Mandonnet, p. 134).

[3] . . . ; et ideo anima virtutem habet per quam facit species sensibiles esse intelligibiles actu, quae est intellectus agens; et habet virtutem per quam est in potentia, ut efficiatur in actu determinatae cognitionis a specie rei sensibilis, factae intelligibilis actu: et haec virtus vel potentia dicitur intellectus possibilis: et harum duarum virtutum operationes sequitur omne nostrum intelligere, tam principiorum, quam conclusionum; . . . (S. Thomae, *in II Sent.*, d. 17, q. 2, a. 1, resp., ed. Mandonnet, p. 428).

[4] *In Boet. de Trin.*, VI, 2 resp., ed. Mandonnet, pp. 132-133.

*ratio* insofar as it always does this by composing and dividing.[5] But the imagination does not judge upon things (I do not mean " judge " in the sense of discern or discriminate), nor does it perform any act of composing or dividing in such wise as to produce a cognition which is complex; as Philoponus remarks, " *neque enim aliud alij complicat; sed solos typos sensibilium recipit.*" [6] Thus the imagination cannot be assimilated as *intellectus* even to the second operation of the intellect.[7]

It remains that the fancy can be named only *intellectus*, and is thus likened to the *intelligentia indivisibilium* alone. St. Thomas even uses the word " simple apprehension " in a large sense to describe its operation—*ad simplicem apprehensionem rei, qualem proponit phantasia*—and both he and Aristotle had been forced to make clear in what the *intelligentia indivisibilium* in the imagination differ from the *intelligentia indivisibilium* in the intellect; for since the imagination still presents things under the conditions of matter, where each individual is one in such manner that there can be a second like to it, the imagination is an act of simple gaze at an object indivisible only in potency and not indivisible in act.[8]

[5] Cf. S. Thomae, *De Verit.*, 15, 1 ad 5; *ibid.*, resp.; *op. cit.*, 1, 12 resp.

[6] Quod igitur dicit, hoc est quia ipsa quidem secundum se fantasia neque affirmat aliquid neque negat. Neque enim aliud alij complicat, sed solos typos sensibilium recipit (Ioannis Grammatici, *super III de Anima* [ed. Marcel De Corte, *Le Commentaire de Jean Philopon sur le Troisième Livre du " Traité de l'Ame " d'Aristote*, Liège/Paris, 1934, p. 83. 36-84. 3]).

[7] . . . Sed ad phantasiam non sequitur passio in appetitu; quia dum aliquid apparet nobis secundum phantasiam, similiter nos habemus, ac si consideremus in pictura aliqua terribilia vel sperabilia; ergo opinio none est idem quod phantasia.

Huius autem differentiae ratio est, quia appetitus non patitur neque movetur *ad simplicem apprehensionem rei, qualem proponit phantasia.* Sed oportet quod apprehendatur sub ratione boni vel mali, convenientis vel nocivi. Et hoc facit opinio in hominibus, *componendo et dividendo,* dum opinatur hoc esse terribile vel malum, illud autem esse sperabile vel bonum. *Phantasia autem non componit neque dividit* (S. Thomae, *in De An.*, III, 4, nos. 634-635; we have added the italics in this text). Cf.: Deinde cum dicit " est autem " ostendit differentiam inter phantasiam et intellectum. Et primo quantum ad operationem communem intellectus, quae est compositio et divisio; dicens quod phantasia est alterum ab affirmatione vel negatione intellectus; quia in complexione intelligibilium iam est verum et falsum: quod non est in phantasia. Nam cognoscere verum et falsum est solius intellectus (*op. cit.*, III, 13, n. 793).

[8] *τὰ δὲ πρῶτα νοήματα τίνι διοίσει τοῦ μὴ φαντάσματα εἶναι; ἢ οὐδὲ τἆλλα φαν-*

2. Rarely, if ever, in the texts has sense memory been given the names *ratio* or *intellectus*. But we must not forget that it is a kind of reason, for the most accurate description of its activity is that which Aristotle has left us: its act is a kind of syllogizing, and in man this introduces into the act a certain deliberative character.[9]

3. Thus both imagination and memory avoid participating in either the *intellectus* or *ratio* which belongs to the order of the second operation of the intellect; for imagination is assimilated only to that *intellectus* which is the act of simple gaze at actually indivisible essences, and memory participates in that *ratio* alone which is syllogizing. The cogitative sense, however, participates in the *ratio* both of the second and of the third order of operation of the human intellect. In the first place, it performs a judicative act upon the useful and the harmful by way of presenting these to appetite; in the second place, it carries on that discursive activity which terminates in ἐμπειρία, *experimentum*.[10]

Of the internal senses, then, the common sense alone does not participate in reason or in *intellectus*; and we should suspect that it belongs to a different order of cognition from that of imagination, sense memory, or the cogitative sense.

B. Since faculty as such is passive potency—it is, in fact, that by which the living creature participates in passive potency, since only God is His active potency and only prime matter is its passive potency—in no power can there be activity until

τάσματα, ἀλλ' οὐκ ἄνευ φαντασμάτων (*De Anima* Γ. 8, 432a12-14). Cf. the comment of St. Thomas on this text: Inquirit in quo differant primi intellectus, idest intelligentiae indivisibilium, cum non sint phantasmata. Et respondet, quod non sunt sine phantasmatibus, sed tamen non sunt phantasmata, quia phantasmata sunt similitudines particularium, intellecta autem sunt universalia ab individuantibus conditionibus abstracta: unde phantasmata sunt indivisibilia in potentia, et non in actu (*in De An.*, III, 13, n. 794).

[9] *De Memoria et Reminiscentia* 453a4-14; *Hist. Animalium*, I, 1, 488b24-26. Cf. S. Thomae, *in De Mem. et Rem.*, 8, nos. 399-400; *op. cit.*, 5, n. 362; *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 78, a. 4, resp.

[10] Aristotelis, *Anal. Post.*, B. 19, esp. 100a3-6. Cf. S. Thomae, *in Anal. Post.*, II, 20, ed. Leon. esp. n. 11; *in Met.*, I, 1, ed. Cathala no. 15.

first it will have been made to be in act. In the intellect, for example, it is not until the possible intellect will have been made to be in act by the *species* that it can engage on the immanent action of its own which is the enunciation of the *verbum*.

Now sense is a certain passion: its activity consists not so much in its moving as in its being moved; it is necessary, then, that the sense be in act before any sense faculty will have been placed in an order of active potency in which the sense can be active with respect to other sensible things of that same order. But one power can and does exercise an act with regard to another. Yet while it is true that the act of the common sense follows upon the external senses in act, nevertheless that which is described as the action correlative to the active potency which the animal possesses by reason of the sense in act is not any activity of the common sense, but is *φαντασία*. That is Aristotle's famous definition of *φαντασία*: *κίνησις ὑπὸ τῆς αἰσθήσεως τῆς κατ' ἐνέργειαν γιγνομένη*.[11]

The act of sense memory is subsequent upon the things of sense, many of them presented one after another by acts of simple recall, and that act of the cogitative sense called *ἐμπειρία* is subsequent upon the act of memory, as ultimately induction is subsequent upon many acts which are *experimenta*. That is the famous procession described in the *Posterior Analytics* (II, 19): *αἴσθησις→μνήμη→ἐμπειρία→νοῦς→ἐπιστήμη*. But memory is not called *motus factus a phantasia quae secundum actum; experimentum* is not called *motus factus a memoria quae secundum actum*; induction is not called *motus factus ab experimento quod secundum actum*. In the midst of an excellent treatise on internal sensation John of St. Thomas remarks that *phantasia* in the Aristotelian definition covers the internal powers outside of the common sense.[12] Perhaps this is true of

[11] *De Anima*, Γ. 3, 429a1; cf. *Rhet.*, A. 11, 1370a28. The quotation occurs many times in St. Thomas, e. g., *in Phys.*, VIII, 6; *in de Sensu et Sensato*, 2, n. 311; *in de An.*, II, 4, n. 265; III, 6, n. 659; III, 13, n. 792, etc.

[12] Dico primo: Phantasia communiter sumpta pro potentiis interioribus praeter sensum communem, definitur a Philosopho, quod est " motus factus a sensu secundum actum " (*Curs. Phil. Thom.*, Phil. Nat., p. IV, q. viii, art. 2, ed. Reiser, p. 252).

fancy in a most general manner. But it is not at all true for our present concern, for memory as a further act is described as subsequent upon the fancy, so defined.[13] Rather it must be said that fancy is a movement caused by the sense in act, because in its movement it is like to the movement of the sense, and only the fancy has this character: *similis est motui sensus, et nihil aliud nisi phantasia invenitur esse tale*;[14] for fancy differs from the three acts of the external sense as effect from cause,[15] and a cause which brings about movement insofar as it is being moved itself, causes a movement like to the movement by which it is moved.[16] But the movement which is memory, as a kind of syllogizing, is not similar to fancy, which is a kind of simple apprehension; even more diverse is experiment from memory; and induction, which in its term surpasses the order of sense altogether, is most removed in its movement from experiment.

The question that remains, of course, is this: if the act of the *sensus communis* be posterior to the act of the external senses, in what may it differ from *phantasia,* which is a movement

[13] Memoria enim sequitur phantasiam, quae est motus factus a sensu secundum actum, ut habetur in secundo de Anima (S. Thomae, *in Met.*, I, 1, n. 10). St. Thomas's reference is to the second and not the third book of the *De Anima,* because in the arabic-latin translation that accompanied the translation of the commentary of Averroes, the third book begins at book III, chapter 4, 429a10 of the Greek text. In his own commentary on the *De Anima* St. Thomas begins the third book at 424b22.

[14] Ex omnibus autem his concludit, quod phantasia sit *quidam motus causatus a sensu secundum actum*; qui quidem motus non est sine sensu, neque potest inesse his quae non sentiunt. Quia si aliquis motus fit a sensu secundum actum, similis est motui sensus, et nihil aliud nisi phantasia invenitur esse tale. Relinquitur ergo, quod phantasia sit huiusmodi motus. Et ex hoc quod est motus causatus a sensu, similis ei, . . . (S. Thomae, *in De An.*, III, 6, n. 659).

[15] *Ibid.*, n. 664.

[16] Deinde proponit quod ab actu sensus contingit quemdam motum fieri. Quod quidem manifestum fit ex eo quod primo proponebatur, scilicet quod ab eo quod est motum, contingit moveri alterum. Sensus autem secundum actum fit, ex eo quod movetur a sensibilibus; unde relinquitur, quod a sensu secundum actum causetur aliquis motus. Ex quo etiam manifestum est, quia motus causatur ab actu sensus, necesse est quod sit similis sensui, quia omne agens agit simile sibi. Unde et illud, quod movet inquantum movetur, causat motum similem motui quo ipsum movetur (*Ibid.*, n. 658).

similar in kind to the movement in the external sense and is a movement which is an effect of the sense in act as cause?

C. The object of the common sense is not the common sensibles, *communia sensibilia*: movement, quiet, number, figure, magnitude, unity, time, the rough, the smooth, the acute, the obtuse, and the like.

More than one manual of psychology, as they call it, describes the object of the common sense as the *communia sensibilia*, apparently because it is a matter of record that there is a common sense, that there are common sensibles, and that every power is distinguished by its acts and its object. (We may point out that the correlate of that position is the equally false proposition that the common sense can perceive the common sensibles in isolation.) [17]

[17] A representative list will be found on p. 32 sqq. of the excellent study by Fr. Cornelio Fabro, "Il Problema della Percezione Sensoriale," *Bollettino Filosofico* IV, 1 (1938), 5-62.

Some modern commentators have come to this conclusion as the result of a mistaken reading of an admittedly difficult text in Aristotle: ταῦτα γὰρ πάντα κινήσει αἰσθανόμεθα, οἷον μέγεθος κινήσει: (*De Anima*, Γ. 1, 425a16-17). (Among them is the author of a rather good Latin manual of "psychologia metaphysica" which appeared in a new edition in 1939.) The argument runs thus: we perceive magnitude and all the common sensibles by motion; but the common sense perceives motion, for it perceives the movements of the external senses; therefore the common sense perceives the common sensibles distinctly.

The difficulty, of course, has risen over an equivocation in the word motion, κίνησις.

The text of the *De Anima* says that we perceive *all* the common sensibles by a movement; i.e. 1) we perceive all the common sensibles, of which movement is one, by a movement, and 2) we perceive all the common sensibles by a movement and not by movement (which is one of the common sensibles). There is nothing in Aristotle to show that movement enjoys any priority over magnitude; rather all the texts on the continuum, time, and the like are to the contrary effect; for magnitude comprehends all continua, e.g., movement and time (*Phys.* IV. 2, 220b24; VI. 2, 232a24). There is precisely a question of such priority here, for the text continues ὥστε καὶ σχῆμα· μέγεθος γάρ τι τὸ σχῆμα· . . . κ. τ. λ., i.e., we perceive figure also by a movement, for figure is somehow posterior to magnitude.

It remains that by κινήσει we must understand the movement, *immutatio*, which is sensation. Hence the text says we (i.e. the senses, the external senses as well as the common sense) perceive all the common sensibles, even as we perceive the

The fact is that there is no text in Aristotle which can be interpreted thus and that St. Thomas has explicitly rejected that doctrine:

> Some therefore say that these common sensibles are not sensibles *per accidens* for two reasons: first, because these common sensibles are proper to the common sense just as the proper sensibles are proper to the single senses; secondly, because there cannot be proper sensibles without there being common sensibles, there can however be proper sensibles without sensibles *per accidens*.
>
> Both reasons, however, are insufficient: the first, because it is false that these common sensibles are the proper objects of the common sense. For the common sense is a certain potency wherein are terminated changes of all the senses, as will be shown below. It is impossible, therefore, for the common sense to have any proper object that is not the object of a proper sense. But as for the changes of the proper senses by their objects, which the proper senses cannot have, just as it [the common sense] perceives the very changes of the senses, so it distinguishes between the sensibles of the different senses. For by the common sense we perceive that we live and we distinguish between the sensibles of the different senses, for instance, between white and sweet.[18]

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proper sensibles, by a kind of immutation, since both the common and proper sensibles are *sensibilia per se*.

The exact reading of the text has not escaped St. Thomas: Quaecumque enim sentiuntur per hoc quod immutant sensum, sentiuntur per se et non secundum accidens. Nam hoc est per se sentire, pati aliquid a sensibili. Sed omnia haec sensibilia, per immutationem quamdam sentiuntur. Et hoc est quod dicit, quod haec omnia sentimus "motu," idest quadam immutatione. Manifestum est enim quod magnitudo immutat sensum, cum sit subjectum qualitatis sensibilis puta coloris aut saporis, et qualitates non agunt sine suis subjectis. Ex quo apparet, quod figuram etiam cognoscimus cum quadam immutatione, quia figura est aliquid magnitudinis, quia consistit in conterminatione magnitudinis. Est enim figura quae termino vel terminis continetur, ut dicitur in 1 Euclidis (*in De An.*, III, 1, no. 577).

[18] Dicunt igitur quidam, quod hujusmodi communia sensibilia non sunt sensibilia per accidens, propter duas rationes. *Primo* quidem, quia hujusmodi sensibilia communia sunt propria sensui communi, sicut sensibilia propria sunt propria singulis sensibus. *Secundo*, quia sensibilia propria non possunt esse sine sensibilibus communibus; possunt autem esse sine sensibilibus per accidens.

Utraque autem responsio *incompetens est*. *Prima* quidem, quia falsum est, quod ista sensibilia communia sint propria objecta sensus communis. Sensus autem communis est quaedam potentia, ad quam terminantur immutationes omnium sensuum, ut infra patebit. Unde impossibile est quod sensus communis habeat aliquod proprium objectum, quod non sit objectum sensus proprii. Sed circa immutationes

Apparently that doctrine had been taught earlier, for Avicenna attacks it as well.[19]

While the doctrine of the *sensibilia communia* as object of the common sense is found in the pseudo-thomistic opusculum *De Potentiis Animae*,[20] Father Fabro is exactly right in concluding that the "certain ones" to whom St. Thomas refers is St. Albert the Great, on the strength of the *Summa de Creaturis*;[21] it surely is not Averroes.[22]

ipsas sensuum propriorum a suis objectis, quas sensus proprii habere non possunt: sicut quod percipit ipsas immutationes sensuum, et discernit inter sensibilia diversorum sensuum. Sensu enim communi percipimus nos vivere et discernimus inter sensibilia diversorum sensuum, scilicet album et dulce. (S. Thomae, *in De An.*, II, 13, nos. 289-390).

[19] Iam autem putaverunt aliqui hominum quod haec sensibilia communia habent sensum existentem in animalibus in quo conveniunt: et a quo apprehenduntur. sed non est ita. tu enim scis quod quaedam ex his apprehenduntur per colorem: qui si non essent: non apprehenderentur: et quaedam apprehenduntur per tactum. qui si non essent non apprehenderentur. si autem possibile esset aliquod istorum apprehendi sine mediante qualitate quae est primum apprehensum ab alio istorum sensuum. tunc esset hoc possibile. sed uti nobis sit impossibile apprehendere illud nisi mediante apprehendente quod apprehendit sensu cognitio. aut significatione sive mediante sensu. hoc non habet sensum communem ullo modo (Avicennae, *Lib. VI Naturalium* III. 8, ed. Venet. [1508] fol. 17rb). Sensus autem qui est communis alius ab eo quem tenent illi: qui putaverunt quod sensibilia communia haberent sensum communem (*op. cit.*, IV, 1, fol. 17rbA).

[20] Chapter 4, ed. Mandonnet, p. 353. [21] Cornelio Fabro, *op. cit.*, pp. 34-35.

[22] The common sensibles are proper to the common sense only in the way that they are proper to the external senses, i. e., both the common sensibles and the proper sensibles are *sensibilia per se*: Cum declaravit duos modos sensibilium per se, scilicet propriorum et communium, incepit declarare tertium modum, qui est sensibilis per accidens. . . . Et etiam sensibilia communia, ut declarabitur, sunt propria sensui communi, quemadmodum ista sunt propria unicuique sensuum: . . . (Averrois Cordubensis, *super II de Anima*, text. et com. 65, ed. Venet. apud Iuntas [1550-52] fol. 139va). The other relevant texts are the commentaries on texts 133 and 134. For the benefit of those to whom the best edition is not available we cite these texts:

Et etiam impossibile est aliud sentiens esse a quinque sensibus, ita quod sensibile eius est aliquod unum sensibilium communium, sub quibus sunt sensibilia propria unicuique sensuum quinque, nisi sensibilia essent communia unicuique sensuum accidentaliter. et dicit hoc, quia, si essent eis accidentaliter, contingeret ut essent alicui sensui essentialiter. quod enim invenitur alicui accidentaliter, debet inveniri alij essentialiter. Deinde dicit verbi gratia motui et cetera idest et sensibilia communia non sunt comprehensa a quinque sensibus accidentaliter, verbi gratia motus, et quies, et figura, et quantitas, et numerus. omnia enim ista sentiuntur a

According to St. Albert there are three acts of the common sense. The apprehension of the *sensatum commune* is its act *per se*, and it is defined by that act. The apprehension of the proper sensible befits it *per posterius*; but the apprehension of the acts of the external senses befits it *per accidens*.[23] In support of this position was the earlier text, " . . . *probatur per hoc quod dicit Philosophus, quod sensata communia per se sunt sensus communis.*"[24] As Father Fabro remarks " Truly, the phrase alluded to [25] has not been reported with entire fidelity."

The fact is that the common sensibles are not the object of any sense, and that in the text of Aristotle to which St. Albert refers the οὐ κατὰ συμβεβηκός makes clear that when we have

quinque sensibus per aliam motionem, et passionem. et quod est ita necesse est ut sit essentialiter.

Deinde dicit, verbi gratia quantitas etc., idest verbi gratia quantitas. sensus enim innati sunt comprehendere eam per aliquam passionem vel motus, et similiter est de figura. figura enim est quantitas cum aliqua qualitate. Deinde dicit. quies autem non per motum, etcetera idest comprehensio autem quietis est per comprehensionem privationis motus. cum enim comprehenderunt motum essentialiter, comprehendunt privationem eius essentialiter scilicet quietem. Comprehensio vero numeri et multitudinis a sensibus est per comprehensionem privationis continui; quod est magnitudo et iam declaratum est quod continuum comprehenditur essentialiter; ergo et sua privatio comprehenditur essentialiter (*op. cit.* text. et com. 133, fol. 153ra; it should be remarked how much in agreement the text of St. Thomas *in De An.*, III, 1, part of which is cited in note 17 above, is with the commentary of Averroes).

Et, cum declaratum est quod communia sensibilia comprehendiuntur (*sic*) a quinque sensibus essentialiter, manifestum est quod impossibile est sensum proprium esse alicuius istorum sensibilium communium, verbi gratia motus, aut quantitas. quoniam, si ita esset, tunc sentiremus motum, aut sibi similes de sensibilibus communibus, non per se, sed per medium: sicut comprehendimus per visum hoc esse dulce mediante colore (*op. cit.*, text. et com. 134, fol. 153rb).

[23] Tres sunt actus sensus communis, sed non eodem modo ei conveniunt. Apprehensio enim sensati communis est actus suus per se, et per illum diffinitur. Apprehensio autem sensati proprii convenit ei per posterius, scilicet in quantum sensatum proprium est in sensato communi ut in subiecto. Sed apprehensio actuum convenit ei per accidens, in quantum unumquodque propriorum reducitur in ipsum (S. Alberti Magni, *Summa de Creaturis*, II, q. 36, a. 1, ed. Borgnet tom. 35, p. 320a [hereinafter cited in this fashion: B35.320a]; cf. *op. cit.*, q. 34, a. 2 ad 2, B35.299b).

[24] *Op. cit.*, q. 35, a. 1, B35.309ab.

[25] τῶν δὲ κοινῶν ἤδη ἔχομεν αἴσθησιν κοινήν, οὐ κατὰ συμβεβηκός (*De Anima*, Γ. 1, 425a27).

sensation of the common sensibles, they do not fall within the class of the *sensibilia per accidens* but of the *sensibilia per se*.[26]

There is no doubt that the position of St. Thomas rather than that of St. Albert is the true one. But because the authority of St. Albert is great, it must be shown how he was forced to teach that the object of the common sense is the common sensibles, in the face of the text of Aristotle and of the multitude of Greek and Arabian commentators to whom both he and St. Thomas owed so much.[27]

In the course of another enquiry we found it necessary to explain at some length St. Albert's teaching on the *totum potestativum*, on the nature of the soul and its faculties.[28] We must recall that doctrine briefly.

"1. The soul in itself is substance and is subsistence, altogether apart from and distinct from body. So considered the soul exists with the existence only of its highest part, in whose supreme unity and power all the lower parts are contained without distinction.

"2. It is the same soul which under another consideration acts as form and produces *esse* for that of which it is the form by a diffusion of itself in the informed thing; to speak more

[26] Deinde cum dicit "at vero," quia posset aliquis dicere, quod est aliquis sensus cognoscitivus sensibilium communium: *excludit hoc tali ratione.* Quicquid cognoscitur ab uno sensu, ut proprium sensibile ejus, non cognoscitur ab aliis sensibus, nisi per accidens: sed sensibilia communia non sentiuntur per accidens ab aliquo sensuum, sed per se a pluribus: sensibilia igitur communia non sunt propria objecta alicujus sensus (S. Thomae, *in De An.*, III, 1, n. 575). It is true, however, that this text says principally that the common sensibles are not the object of any external sense.

[27] That the debt of thirteenth century Christian philosophers to the Arabian commentators is particularly great in the matter of the internal senses has been demonstrated by Harry Austryn Wolfson, "The Internal Sense in Latin, Arabic and Hebrew Philosophic Texts," *Harvard Theological Review*, XXVIII, 2 (1935), 69-133.

[28] Bernard J. Muller-Thym, *The Establishment of the University of Being in the Doctrine of Meister Eckhart of Hochheim* (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1939), chapter II: "The nature of the soul according to the German Dominican school," pp. 28-67.

exactly, the diffusion is *esse*. From the one, solitary, supreme subsistence which is the soul and its highest part emanate lower forms in turn, which also give to each of the parts they inform its *esse*. This is all described in such way that there is only one substantial form and one *esse*, the function of that form in the sense of an activity which form exercises as form; and yet in regard of the *quod est* in which that unique *esse* is diffused, the very same *esse* is multiple, since it has been multiplied according to the number of existents to which it is the *esse*.

"3. The relation of superior to inferior in this system of formalities is that of the *quo est* or *esse* to the *quod est*, of that which is formal to that which is material; their union is the unity of act and potency, of that form which in the thing corresponds to the intention which is the specific difference to that matter which in the thing corresponds to that intention which is the genus."[29]

The order of descent of "forms" in man follows this pattern: rationality, rational animal, rational sensible vegetable. But within each order is to be discovered a similar descent, with the lower related to the higher as matter to form or as *quod est* to *quo est*. In the intellective order, for example, the possible intellect flows out of the *quod est* of the soul and the agent intellect (the *unum formalissimum*, that which *absolute et simpliciter est substantia hominis*[30]) flows out of *quo est*.[31] We should expect St. Albert to have continued that descent in a description of sensibility; and when we find many texts in which he speaks of the common sense as the one most formal part of the sense order,[32] we are on sure ground. In the same way,

[29] *Op. cit.*, pp. 55-56. It is really important to study the texts of St. Albert presented in this chapter, as a result of whose analysis these conclusions have been reached; for in the development of the present argument we must regard the basic doctrine as established, in order that we may avoid constant references to our monograph.

[30] S. Alberti M., *De Anima*, III, tr. 5, c. 4.

[31] S. Alberti M., *S. de Creat.*, II, q. 56, a. 1 ad 1, B35. 478b.

[32] E. g., the text of Aristotle ἔστι δέ τις καὶ κοινὴ δύναμις ἀκολοῦσθα πάσαις St. Albert interpolates thus: Est autem quaedam communis *et formalis* potentia quae

among the external senses vision is the most formal, for by reason of its excellence, its knowing many proper and common sensibles, it is more apt "*ad notitiam quae est per inventionem.*"[33] But the sense of touch, as Aristotle and St. Thomas also taught, is closer to the common sense; whence the sense of touch is founded on the power of the common sense, which is the source whence it flows *formaliter*—in the manner of descent of form.[34] And when the common sense, the *principium* and *fons* of the sense order, is described related to the external senses as the *commune* to the *particulare*,[35] as form to matter at least

sequitur omnes . . . (*De Somno et Vigilia,* I, tr. 2, c. 1, B9.138a); . . . sensus enim communis qui formalis est, . . . (*De An.,* II, tr. 4, c. 8, B5.306a); Sed ad hujus solutionem hoc oportet supponere quod inferius ostendemus, quod scilicet somnus sit in animali secundum *primum sensum, quod est sensus communis,* et hoc est, quod comparat sensata particularia ad propria, sicut prius diximus in libro de *Anima.* Cum autem spiritus sit formarum sensibilium vehiculum, et recurvit spiritus ad interiora, virtus vecta ad interius adhuc comparat ea sicut primum: et tunc magis quando ab exterioribus abstrahitur et abducitur: et quoad hoc solum dicitur, quod somnus est recursus sensus communis ad interiora: quia virtus spiritus sequens ipsam recurrit ad primum ejus principium, quod est quasi cor. Nec est intelligendum hoc de potentia animae, quae vocatur sensus communis: haec enim est sita in organo suo sicut visiva virtus in oculo, sed intelligitur de virtute quae influit super instrumentum, et *de forma quae formaliter sensus communis vocatur: illa enim adhuc interius retracta sensus communis objectum est, et discernit eam sensus communis* (*De Somno et Vigilia,* I, tr. 1, c. 9, B9.135b-136a; we have added the italics). In this text the *primum sensum* and the form called common sensing is the common sensibles, and, as he says, this form is the object of the common sense; why St. Albert attributes the formality to the object of the common sense will become clear in the course of this exposition.

[33] *De Sensu et Sensato,* tr. 1, c. 2, B9.4a. The text continues (B9.4b): . . . propter quod etiam formalissimus sensuum est visus. Cf. also: *De An.,* II, tr. 4, c. 11, text. et com. 147, B5.310b.

[34] . . . : virtus ipsa fundatur supra virtutem sensus communis qui est suum principium unde fluxit formaliter: . . . (*De Somno et Vigilia,* I, tr. 2, c. 1, B9.138b).

[35] Sunt omnes sensus unum in forma virtutis sensitivae, quae fons est virtutem (*sic*) sensuum particularium: et ipsi particulares sensus sunt sicut rivi ex communi fonte derivati: et hoc sensu communi est judicium circa particulares actiones quae sunt sensuum particularium: et hoc modo reflectitur virtus sensitiva super se, quando judicat de seipsa: sensus enim communis qui formalis est, reflectitur super particularem judicando sensibiliter de actione et operatione ejus. Et hoc modo nihil prohibet quando idem sit activum et passivum: agere enim quoddam est judicare et componendo et dividendo, et hoc est communis sensus, qui est formalis: recipere autem et habere formas sensibiles est pati, et hoc est sensuum particularium (*De*

in the judgment it passes on the action of the external sense,[36] there can be little doubt that we are looking at a further elaboration of the same pattern of descent in forms.

At this point, however, St. Albert was faced with a problem which he was the first to recognize.

The common sense must keep a certain formality, community, and universality; that community, however, could not be the community of a genus, for the community of that which is most formal is as that of a differentia, convertible with the thing defined; this had been his constant teaching on the soul and on the *forma totius*. Let us consider this alternative: if the common sense enjoyed the community of that which is as the ultimate difference, then it would have to be a whole, a *totum potestativum*; in no animal, above all not in man, is this true. Faced with the necessity of having something in which to root the community and formality of the common sense, St. Albert turned to the community of object; and so he made the common sensibles the object of the common sense. That is the force of the capital text:

> Therefore it may be asked, why is it called *common?* It is not called common as a genus nor as an integral whole or *totum potestativum*. If it were common as a genus it would be predicated of each of the proper senses, which is false; if as a whole, then its essence would be nothing outside the essence of the proper senses, just as the essence of the whole is nothing outside of the parts constituting it. Therefore it remains that its community must be on the part of the object.[37]

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*An.*, II, tr. 4, c. 8, B5.306a). For the *commune* and *particulare*, cf. B. J. Muller-Thym, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

[36] . . . : sicut enim in libro de *Anima* dictum est, sensus communis se habet ut forma, et sensus proprius ut materia in judicio sensibilium: . . . (*De Somno et Vigilia*, I, tr. 1, c. 9, B9.136b).

[37] Quaeritur ergo, Quare dicitur *communis?* Non enim dicitur communis ut genus, neque ut totum integrale sive potestativum. Si enim esset communis ut genus, praedicaretur de singulis propriis, quod falsum est. Si vero ut totum tunc sua essentia nihil esset extra essentiam propriorum sensuum, sicut essentia totius nulla est extra suas partes constituentes ipsum. Ergo relinquitur, quod communitas ipsius sit ex parte objecti. (S. Alberti M., *S. de Creat.*, II, q. 35, a. 2, B35.312b). The text con-

This position based on a descent in formalities of the object had its own consequences. The first was the enumeration of the three acts of the common sense already mentioned,[38] these acts arranged according to the priority of one over another. We have already considered texts to the effect that if the common sensibles of themselves were the object of any faculty they could be perceived only accidently by another; St. Albert could not allow exactly this conclusion, both because he wished to be faithful to Aristotle (for whom the common sensibles are *sensibilia per se*) and because it was necessary that the common sensibles be *sensibilia per se* in order that the common sensibles be diffused through the external senses by a descent of forms. Hence he introduced the interpretation that if the common sensibles of themselves were the object *of any external sense*, they could be perceived *by another external sense* only accidentally.[39] Even as the soul, one in essence and existence, by a descent or a diffusion (*esse*) is a manifold of powers, so the first sensible, object of the common sense, is many in its descent

tinues in the *solutio:* Concedimus has ultimas rationes ostendentes quare sensus dicatur communis. Cf. also: Propter hoc dicimus ad hoc et his similia omnia, quod sensus communis est una numero forma quae est universalis non ut praedicabile: sed sicut causa formaliter praebens ea quae oriuntur ex ipsa: . . . (*De An.*, II, tr. 4, c. 12, B5.312b; one should consult the rest of this long and remarkable text). We can observe certain points of doctrine in which St. Thomas continues the work of his teacher. For example, in the *De Ente et Essentia* he continues the teaching of St. Albert on the *forma totius* in this, that since no integral part is predicated f its whole, and since, e. g., "animality" is predicated of the whole "man," the genus, differentia, and species must each be a *forma totius*; but the other half of St. Albert's doctrine on the *forma totius* he rejects. (Cf., e. g., S. Thomae, *Quodl.*, II, 2, 4 resp. "Dicunt autem quidam, quod forma partis . . . sed compositum ex materia et forma" reports St. Albert exactly and destroys his position.) Here appears a similar case. When St. Thomas says that the common sense is common not with the community of a genus (e. g., *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 78, a. 4 ad 1) he has taken just this much and no more from St. Albert.

[38] The text of the *Summa de Creaturis* cited in note 23 above. Cf. also: Ad aliud dicendum quod sensatum commune per se est sensus communis, secundum quod per se dicit immediatum, quod non vi alterius facit sensum, per posterius autem est sensuum propriorum, sicut visus, quia primo et per se accipit albedinem, et posterius accipit figuram et magnitudinem albi, quia in magnitudine album est sicut in subjecto (*Op. cit.*, q. 34, a. 2 ad 2, B35.299b).

[39] S. Alberti M., *De An.*, II, tr. 4, c. 6, B5.300b.

and in its *esse diversum*,[40] for "*unus actus per se est unius potentiae, sed plures per posterius.*"[41]

It is necessary to understand that St. Albert has taken his position not as the result of an exegesis on the text of Aristotle, not of an independent analysis of the character of sensibility, not of any personal observation; rather is it a position, and the only one, he thought he could adopt in order to avoid a difficulty generated by his own theory of being. We may return to our main line of argument.

It remains that when Aristotle says that there are three kinds of sensibles, two *per se* and one *per accidens*,[42] we must understand simply that the two kinds of *sensibilia per se* are the *sensibilia propria* and the *sensibilia communia*. Thus from the outset magnitude, number and the rest are perceived *per se* by the external sense, although only in terms of that which is its proper object.

Should one ask where in the life of sense the common sensibles are presented for the first time in isolation, we must say in the imagination, not that the object of the imagination is the common sensibles, but because within the new level of "intelligi-

[40] Dicamus ergo secundum praedicta, quod virtutis unius quae secundum essentiam et esse est eadem, non potest esse operatio super duo: sensitivum autem primum non est tale, sed essentialiter est unum, et secundum esse diversificatur: et ideo operatio ejus existens est una secundum quod comparatur ad essentiam ipsius primi sentientis, sed efficitur plures ex parte qua est in esse diverso secundum quod comparatur ad sensus proprios, sicut centrum unum in essentia existens, plura est secundum esse terminando et principiando lineas quae egrediuntur ex ipsa: et haec solutio est Averrois et Alfarabii, et est bona (S. Alberti M., *De Sensu et Sensato*). One may well wonder whether St. Albert has taken any more from Averroes than the elaboration of the image of the center and the radii of the circle.

[41] S. Alberti M., *S. de Creat.*, II, q. 36, a. 1, sol. ad obj. 2 et 3, B35.320a.

Another interesting point: many times St. Albert repeats the dictum *phantasia est motus factus a sensu secundum actum*; yet that formula was far too vague to express the relation between the knowledges of fancy, the common sense and the external sense. It is gratifying, then, to find him modifying this saying of Aristotle: Diximus autem in libro de *Anima*, quod "phantasia est passio sensus communis sicut efficientis: " quoniam est motus et passio a sensu communi facta (*De Memoria et Reminiscentia*, tr. 1, c. 3, B9.102a). The quotation marks should be removed from the Borgnet text.

[42] *De Anima*, Γ. 1, 425a27.

bility" established in function of the object of the *intellectus passivus* magnitude, number and the rest can be presented as in *materia intelligibilis signata* in isolation from *materia sensibilis signata* upon which they do not depend.[43]

For the whole order of sense, always confined to things in their individuality, is more concerned with the accidents of things, as against the intellect which looks rather to essence and to substance. But in material things there is a certain order of accidents, such that the first accident of matter is quantity (to which in one way or another belong all the common sensibles—St. Thomas seems to give priority to magnitude;[44] Avicenna does give it to number);[45] upon quantity follow and in it are received all the other accidents of matter. And the irreducible priority is that which substance enjoys in its absolute consideration; this is attained to only by intellect.[46]

Now because that which is properly intellect is the intellect, and the imagination is named intellect only in its ordering to this, so is matter named *materia intelligibilis* ultimately from the absolute consideration of material substance made by the intellect. Hence the text we have been analyzing continues: "*Et de his abstractis est mathematica quae considerat quantitates, et ea quae quantitates consequuntur, ut figuram, et hujusmodi.*"

[43] Following Aristotle, St. Thomas sees in this the reason for the greatest kinds of false judgment the imagination can make. S. Thomae, *in De An.*, III, 6, n. 663. Cf. also S. Alberti M., *De Anima*, III, tr. 1, c. 8, B5.327b.

[44] *In De Anima*, III, 1, nos. 577, 578.

[45] Numerus autem est qui magis debet vocari communis: omnes enim sensus conveniunt in illo (Avicennae, *Lib. VI Nat.*, III, 8, ed. Venet. [1508] fol. 17rb).

[46] Unde cum omnia accidentia comparentur ad substantiam sicut forma ad materiam, et cujuslibet accidentis ratio dependeat a substantia, impossibile est aliquam talem formam a substantia separari. Sed accidentia adveniunt substantiae quodam ordine. Nam primo advenit ei quantitas, deinde qualitas, deinde passiones et motus. Unde quantitas potest intelligi in substantia antequam intelligantur in ea qualitates sensibiles, a quibus dicitur materia sensibilis: et sic secundum rationem suae substantiae non dependet quantitas a materia sensibili, sed intelligibili tantum. Substantia enim remotis accidentibus non remanet nisi intellectu comprehensibilis, eo quod sensibiles potentiae non pertingunt usque ad substantiae comprehensionem (S. Thomae, *in Boet. de Trin.*, V, 3 resp., ed Mandonnet, p. 112).

But the order of singulars that mathematics considers falls beneath the imagination, exceeding that which falls beneath the sense and not attaining to that which the intellect alone can consider.[47] And so the intelligible matter in which the judgments of mathematics terminate must be matter as it can be known by that intellect which is the *intellectus passivus*.[48]

The imagination, then, and not the common sense, ushers in an order of cognoscibility between the pure sensibility of the external sense and the formal intelligibility of the intellect.

These negations we have made about the common sense:

A. that it is neither *intellectus* nor *ratio* by participation,

B. that its act is not caused by the sense in act in such wise that a new level of intelligibility is attained in its object, wherefore

C. its object is not the common sensibles—

all come to the one truth, that the common sense in its operation dwells at the level of pure sensibility with which the external senses each has been already actually concerned. It remains, then, that we describe its function within the economy of that which is sensible and is nothing more.

## II

If we had never been presented with the problem of how the infra-intelligible world of sense could be made to be actually intelligible, it might well happen that we should never come to know the agent intellect; yet from that beginning we grow to the realization that the agent intellect is a co-principle of the entire intellectual order, and more and more we are struck

[47] *Op. cit.*, VI, 2 resp., ed. Mandonnet, pp. 132-133.

[48] Nec differt utrum singularia sint sensibilia vel intelligibila. Singularia quidem sensibilia sunt sicut circuli aerei et lignei. Intelligibilia singularia sunt sicut circuli mathematici. Quod autem in mathematicis considerentur aliqua singularia, ex hoc patet, quia considerantur ibi plura unius speciei, sicut plures lineae aequales, et plures figurae similes. Dicuntur autem intelligibilia hujusmodi singularia, secundum quod absque sensu comprehenduntur per solam phantasiam, quae quandoque intellectus vocatur secundum illud in tertio de Anima: "Intellectus passivus corruptibilis est" (S. Thomae, *in Met.*, VII, 10, n. 1494).

with wonder at the contemplation of what it is to be always in act by essence. A comparison would not be altogether valid for the common sense, both because there is nothing at all in the order of sense like an agent sense,[48a] and because we do have awareness of the act of the common sense. Nevertheless there is this measure of truth, that from a rather simple beginning of knowledge about the common sense, we may come to a remarkable realization of what it is to enjoy the perfection of the order of pure sensibility.

Part of the basic argument of Aristotle and St. Thomas is well enough known. Each sense can discern differences contained under its own proper object; but sight is not capable of judging of the sweet, which it perceives *per accidens*, nor taste of the white, which it perceives *per accidens*; but in terms of that which are had diversely as the white and the sweet, and as following upon the act of the external sense, it is necessary that there be a sense which apprehends in the manner of one that which in the external senses is many; this is the common

[48a] In his commentary on the *De Anima* (II, tr. 3, c. 6, B5.240b sqq.) St. Albert raised the interesting question whether there be one mover of the whole order of things sensible, even as there is the agent intellect for the intelligible order. The opinion of those he calls "moderni," that light is that one mover, he brands as altogether ridiculous. But the older Augustinian difficulty had been how can anything material at all be the cause of something spiritual; and to the great authority of Plato and St. Augustine he pays deference. Cf.: Alii autem antiquiores his dixerunt, quod virtus animae est agens eas intentiones spirituales: et isti sunt qui dixerunt potissimam virtutem sensus esse activam et non passivam: . . . (B5.241b). Opinio autem secunda est multo probabilior, licet modernorum pauci teneant eam: erat enim illa Platonis et etiam Augustini et multorum aliorum magnorum virorum. Tamen sine praejudicio aut ego non intelligo eos, aut ipsi falsum dixerunt B5.243b). St. Albert, surely under the influence of Aristotle and of the great commentators, rejects the opinion because the sensible is already in act and because the sense is passive in its being moved by its object. Now in St. Thomas the common sense has practically nothing that would suggest a comparison with the agent intellect. But as St. Albert had conceived the agent intellect, the common sense almost demanded comparison with the agent intellect, for each was conceived as the *unum formalissimum* in its own border, and each was a formal source of descent, the one of sensible, the other of intelligible forms. Hence later in the *De Anima* (II, tr. 4, c. 12, B5.313a "et hoc est quod intendit dicere Augustinus etc.") St. Albert explained in terms of the doctrine of formalities that St. Augustine's teaching should be assimilated to St. Albert's own description of the common sense.

sense. Thus its object is that perceived as one which the external senses perceive as many, and its relation to the external sense is that of term to principle.

So evident a case is this of the principle that the higher the level of being at which a thing exists the more does it possess its power in a unified manner, that St. Thomas employs the common sense as an example in at least three other instances: 1) to show that separate intellective substances, angels, know singular things through forms which demonstrate both the universal and the particular as we humans know these;[49] 2) to show that God is the purest truth;[50] 3) to show that although even the highest of natural human knowledges suffers division at least into the speculative and the practical, revealed theology does not, for it is "*velut quaedam impressio divinae scientiae, quae est una et simplex omnium.*"[51]

Aristotle had spoken of the common sense as like to a point, either one or two,[52] for a point is one as the terminus of a line but is two as that shared in common by two lines which coincide. As the text of Aristotle suggests, St. Thomas in one place interprets this apparently as a point which is the term of two lines distinguished by section,[53] and in this follows Simplicius.[54] On this M. DeCorte remarks, "We believe with the greater number of the ancient commentators, that it is necessary to see in this point the center of the circle and not, with Simplicius and St. Thomas, the point that segments a line."[55] Upon this

[49] S. Thomae, *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 57, a. 2 resp. (cf. *ST* I. 77. 3 ad 4); *Cont. Gent.*, II, 100, ed. Leonina manualis p 224b.

[50] *Cont. Gent.*, I, 61, p. 56b.

[51] *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 1, a. 3 ad 2, and the resp.

[52] *De Anima*, Γ. 2, 427a10. We may remark that this is not an application of mathematics to physics such as would yield an intermediate science; rather it is a use of mathematics in an allegorical or anagogical sense, so that the example of Aristotle is in a class with, e. g., Richard of St. Victor's description of the four corners of the Ark of the Covenant, or with Henning's gustatory tetrahedron described in the psychology books.

[53] S. Thomae, *in De An.*, III, 4, n. 609; Cf. also, nos. 610 sqq.

[54] Cited by M. DeCorte, "Notes exégetiques sur la théorie aristotélicienne du 'sensus communis,'" *The New Scholasticism*, VI, 3 (1932), p. 200, note 36.

[55] *Op. cit.*, p. 200. The ancient commentators listed in note 36 are Alexander, Themistius, Philoponus, and Sophonias.

comment we would pass two remarks, 1) that the force of the example would be utterly the same, though not so telling perhaps, had St. Thomas confined himself to this one exegesis, and 2) that St. Thomas later in the *De Anima* does speak of the common sense as the center in which all lines terminate.[56] And to the list of commentators we may add another example from Philoponus,[57] one from Avicenna,[58] one from Averroes; [59] St. Albert also followed Avicenna in interpreting the example as the center of a circle; [60] in one place he also makes it the center point which divides the diameter of a circle.[61]

Point as term of a line, however, is only a weak example of term as term is related to principle among knowledges. Hence St. Thomas adds to the example of the center point of a circle the observation that the common sense is one in respect of all sensibles as the intellect is the term of all phantasms.[62] And this is profoundly true. Still the intellect exceeds altogether the order of the phantasm, and although it is true that the

[56] . . . inquantum sensus communis comparatur ad sensus proprios ut quoddam medium, sicut centrum comparatur ad lineas terminatas ad ipsum (S. Thomae, *De An.*, III, 12, no. 768). Et licet sensus exteriores sint plures, tamen ultimum, ad quod terminantur immutationes horum sensuum, est unum; quia est quasi medietas una inter omnes sensus, sicut centrum ad quod terminantur omnes lineae, quasi ad unum medium (*Op. cit.*, no. 773).

[57] . . . sicut est terminus unus, terminum dicens ultimum plurium linearum que in idem conveniunt, quale est circuli centrum ad quod omnes que circumferentia recte conveniunt, quod subjecto quidem unum est signum et impartibile, eo autem quod multorum terminus est, multa est (Ioannis Grammatici, *Super III de Anima*, ed. DeCorte 71.27-31).

[58] . . . : quae vocatur sensus communis: quae est centrum commune omnium sensuum: . . . (Avicennae, *Lib. VI Nat.*, IV, 1 ed. Venet. [1508] fol. 17va).

[59] . . . , sed ista virtus est una et multa, ut punctus, qui est centrum circuli, quando ab eo fuerint ductae multae lineae a centro ad circumferentiam. et hoc intendebat, cum dicit punctus unius, hoc est punctus, qui continetur ab una linea (Averrois Cordubensis, *super II de Anima*, text. et com. 149, ed Venet. apud Iuntas [1550-52] fol. 156rb).

[60] Tertia ratio communitatis est, quod sensus proprii referuntur ad ipsum ut ad unum centrum omnium sensuum, ut dicit Avicenna (S. Alberti M., *S. de Creat.*, II, q. 35, a. 2, B35.312b). Cf.: *op. cit.*, q. 36, a. 2 sol. B35.321b; *De Somno et Vigilia*, I, tr. 2, c. 1, B9.138a; *De Sensu et Sensato*, tr. 3, c. 6, B9.91b.

[61] S. Alberti M., *De Anima*, II, tr. 4, c. 11, B5.311ab.

[62] S. Thomae, *in De An.*, III, 12, n. 774.

common sense exceeds the external senses in its operation, still its object is the sensible in relation to the external senses whose object is some proper sensible. We may understand the common sense as term better if we can find another proportion of principle to term among things at the same level of cognoscibility.

The one clear instance, one we cannot avoid, is that of the two-fold operation of intellect:

> Respondeo dicendum, quod in qualibet cognitione duo est considerare, scilicet principium, et finem sive terminum. Principium quidem ad apprehensionem pertinet, terminus autem ad judicium; ibi enim cognitio perficitur.[63]

Now the intellect, whose object is being, encompasses that object variously in its acts; for the object of the first act is being in its limit, essence, whereas the object of the second operation is being in that which is the exercise of the act of being, *esse*.[64] In the order of generation the first act must precede the second, as the imperfect is always prior to the perfect; but it is impossible that the thing, which exists at the very same level of intelligibility in both acts, enter that imperfect cognition which is simple apprehension without somehow attaining to the perfect stature of intelligibility gained in the second operation. Thus it is that although a universal concept is formed from

[63] S. Thomae, *in Boet. de Trin.*, VI, 2 resp., ed. Mandonnet p. 132. In this article St. Thomas pushes human knowledge back to that which is its ultimate principle, the sense; and the name "apprehension," which expresses technically the simple acceptance of an object of cognition, is applicable not only to the first act of intellect, but also to the knowledge of the external sense and the imagination. There is no question, however, of simple apprehension's being principle and prior in relation to judgment, the term and posterior; e. g., Compositio autem et divisio posterior est consideratione eius *quod quid est*, quod est eius principium (*Cont. Gent.*, I, 58, ed. Leonina man., p. 54b); Intellectus autem noster, apprehendendo incomplexa, nondum pertingit ad ultimum suam perfectionem, quia adhuc est in potentia respectu compositionis et divisionis: sicut et in naturalibus simplicia sunt in potentia respectu commixtorum, et partes respectu totius (*Op. cit.*, I, 59, p. 55b).

[64] *In Boet. de Trin.*, V, 3 resp., ed. Mandonnet, p. 110. Cf.: . . . prima operatio respicit quidditatem rei; secunda respicit esse ipsius (*in I Sent.*, 19. 5. 1 ad 7). Cf. also: *op. cit.*, 38, 1. 3 resp., ed. Mandonnet, p. 903).

particulars by induction, the term of induction is the *intellectus principiorum*.[65]

We are now able to establish the ratio:

$$\frac{\text{movement of external sense}}{\text{movement of common sense}} = \frac{\text{intelligentia indivisibilium}}{\text{operatio componentis et dividentis}} = \frac{\text{principium}}{\text{terminus}}.$$

And because

$$\frac{\text{movement of the external sense}}{\text{the external sense}} = \frac{\text{the movement of the common sense}}{\text{the common sense}}$$

we have

$$\frac{\text{external sense}}{\text{common sense}} = \frac{\text{intelligentia indivisibilium}}{\text{operatio componentis et dividentis}} = \frac{\text{principium}}{\text{terminus}}.$$

For this reason St. Thomas is always insistent that the community of the common sense is not the community of a genus,[66] is not the community of indetermination and of that which is on the side of matter; but in this sense of the word "common" which bears on the perfect, as against the imperfect, state of cognoscibility, in what we believe is a unique text St. Thomas calls the term of intellectual knowledge the common operation of intellect: ". . . *quantum ad operationem communem intellectus, quae est compositio et divisio.*" [67]

Perhaps we must make clear that in no sense do we say the common sense participates in intellect, or its object in anything of intelligibility; we have been studying it with the technique of analogy in order better to understand what it is to be the term of cognition.

We may go a step further by the use of the same method. There are various ways in which anything may terminate in

[65] Cf. Aristotelis, *Eth. Nic.*, Z. 3, 1139b28 sqq., and *Post. Anal.*, B. 19; cf. S. Thomae, in *Eth.*, VI, 3, no. 1148.

[66] E. g., *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 78, a. 4 ad 1.

[67] S. Thomae, *in De An.*, III, 13, n. 793.

something; for term signifies that which is ultimate in regard of anything.[68] There may be that which is term of a magnitude—surface for body, point for line.[69] Term may be the extreme of movement or action, as *esse* is the term of generation;[70] and here much more is the principle operative that term is nobler than that which is terminated as container than thing contained. Again, the constitutive difference is the term of the essence of the species.[71] But if we consider cognition, there is between the *cognoscibile* and the *cognoscens* the proportion of form to matter, of maker to thing made, of act to its potency.[72] Thus it is necessary that that which is a term of cognition be term in function of that which is term of the thing known, for cognition takes place by the assimilation of knower to thing known.[73]

Now the term of the common sense so understood is the sensible, that is, both the sensible in the manifold of the external senses and above all the sensible, common not with the community of a genus or of a predicate, but with the community of the form of a higher order which possesses as one what is shared by many forms of a lower order; moreover, the term of the second operation of the intellect is *ipsum esse rei*. On the

[68] Primo *ponit rationem termini*; dicens, quod terminus dicitur quod est ultimum cujuslibet rei, ita quod nihil de primo terminato est extra ipsum terminum; et omnia quae sunt ejus, continentur intra ipsum (S. Thomae, *in Met.*, V, 19, n. 1044; cf. *Quodl.*, 1, 10, 22 ad 1).

[69] S. Thomae, *in Met., loc. cit.*, n. 1045.

[70] *Ibid.*, n. 1046.

[71] S. Thomae, *in I Sent.*, 43, 1, 1 resp.

[72] Alio modo possunt intelligi convenientia, ita quod conveniant in aliquo ordine, et sic attenditur proportio inter materiam et formam, faciens et factum, et talis proportio requiritur inter cognoscentem et cognoscibile; cum cognoscibile sit quasi actus potentiae cognoscentis . . . (S. Thomae, *in Boet. de Trin.*, I, 2 ad 3, ed. Mandonnet, p. 33). Ad quartum dicendum quod intellectus et intelligibile sunt unius generis sicut potentia et actus (*ibid.* ad 4). Ad secundum dicendum, quod sicut sensus in actu est sensibile in actu, ut dicitur, non ita quod ipsa vis sensitiva sit ipsa similitudo sensibilis quae est in sensu, sed quia ex utroque fit unum, sicut ex actu et potentia; ita et intellectus in actu dicitur esse intellectum in actu, non quod substantia intellectus sit ipsa similitudo per quam intelligit, sed quia illa similitudo est forma ejus (*Summa Theol.*, I, q. 55, a. 1 ad 2).

[73] Si autem est terminus cognitionis, oportet quod sit rei terminus, quia cognitio fit per assimilationem cognoscentis ad rem cognitam (S. Thomae, *loc. cit.*, n. 1048).

strength of our original proportions, then, if we consider this ultimate signification of term, we shall derive the ratio:

$$\frac{\text{the common sense}}{\text{the sensible, common with the community of form}} = \frac{\text{second operation of intellect}}{\text{ipsum esse rei}}$$

There is a certain circularity in knowledge of all orders, which is more or less complete according to the degree of immanence in the activity of the knower; in the intellect that return of knowledge is complete insofar as the intellect knows what it knows and in the same act knows its own act and the proportion of its act to the thing known, in which proportion the *ratio* of truth consists; whence there is truth in the intellect. But the sense knows what it knows, as it also knows its own act, but it does not know the nature of that act to be conformed to the things it knows; whence there is only a partial or incomplete return of the sense upon itself.[74]

It would appear, however, that since such reflection characterizes knowledge in the full enjoyment of the cognoscibility of its object, we find any power making that sort of return upon itself only in the act in which it attains its object in the integral cognoscibility of that order of knowledge. Thus while truth is in the intellect rather than in the sense, truth is in the intellect only in its second operation, for there alone does the intellect have something proper to itself;[75] for the intellect is moved at once to that term of reflexive knowledge, the knowing of the truth by which it judges, only in the act in which it attains to the ultimate act of being and the ultimate principle of intelligibility, *esse*; for "*veritas fundatur magis in esse rei quam in quidditate.*"[76]

The sense, we have just remarked, does make a partial return insofar as the animal knows that it sees, hears and the like. That knowledge, however, both Aristotle and St. Thomas clearly

[74] S. Thomae, *De Verit.*, I, 9 resp. [75] *Op. cit.*, I, 3 resp.

[76] S. Thomae, *in I Sent.*, 19, 5, 1 resp. and ad 7. These texts are famous. Of the many studies based on them we refer to one of the most recent and penetrating, Gerald B. Phelan, "Verum Sequitur Esse Rerum," *Mediaeval Studies*, I (1939), 11-22.

The order of pure sensibility
The order of "intelligibility" begun by the intellectus passivus
powers more immaterial, hence 'magis unita and fewer', more widely separated, of greater excellence
powers more material, hence multiple, less widely separated, of lesser excellence
vision
hearing
the senses which are the order of smell
the senses which are the order of taste
the senses which are the order of touch
phantasia
TERMINUS
phantasia: motus factus a sensu secundum actum; similar in its immutation to the external sense, hence the knowledge of whose act also terminates in the common sense.
[motus]...qui est primus sensuum, et quodammodo radix et fundamentum omnium sensuum; ... sed secundum quod est fundamentum omnium sensuum et propinquius se habens ad fontalem radicem omnium sensuum, qui est sensus communis. (S. Thomae, In De An. III.3, no. 602; cf. De Somno et Vigilia, lect.3)

affirm is had not in the act of vision or of hearing; for it is not by sight that the animal sees that it sees, but by that power named the common sense.[77] It should be well understood that there is no process to infinity in such wise that another sense be necessary in order to know the act of the common sense, even as only the common sense can know the acts (*immutationes*) of the external senses; for we are dealing with a series of ordered causes, and that the common sense knows vision, as well as that it knows its own act, is something which accrues to it by reason of its being the term of the order of knowledge concerned with pure sensibility.

Moreover, although *phantasia*—at least as the act of imagination—ushers in a new order of "intelligibility," still insofar as fancy is *motus factus a sensu secundum actum* and in this movement is like to the movements in the external sense, the acts of the fancy are also known by the common sense.[78] And thus in sleep, although the senses be bound and impeded in their action, so that there is no act of the external sense to terminate in the common sense, if anything remains of the activity of the common sense, it is that it knows the act of fancy; for it sees

[77] Aristotelis, *De Somno*, 2, 455a15-17.

Probat minorem dicens quod in unoquoque sensu particulari est aliquid proprium, et aliquid commune, consequens ad ipsum proprium, et est eis sua propria operatio, ut visui videre, et auditui audire, et quaedam communis potentia sentiendi est, consequens ad omnes sensus particulares. . . . Probat consequens duabus rationibus. Quarum prima talis est. aliquo sentimus nos videre: sed non sensu proprio. ergo aliquis est sensus communis sentiens (S. Thomae, *in De Somno et Vigilia*, 3, ed. Piana [Romae, 1570], sections c and d, fol. 30va). Cf. *in De An.*, II. 13, no. 390. Also . . . a quo etiam percipiuntur actiones sensuum, sicut cum aliquis videt se videre. Hoc enim non potest fieri per sensum proprium, qui non cognoscit nisi formam sensibilis a quo immutatur; in qua immutatione perficitur visio, et ex qua immutatione sequitur alia immutatio in sensu communi, qui visionem percipit (*Summa Theol.*, I, q. 78, a. 4 ad 2). Cf. . . . quia cujuslibet potentiae animae virtus est determinata ad objectum suum; unde et ejus actio primo et principaliter in objectum tendit. In ea vero quibus in objectum tendit, non potest nisi per quandam reditionem, sicut videmus, quod visio primo dirigitur in colorem; sed in actum visionis suae non dirigitur nisi per quandam reditionem, dum videndo colorem videt se videre. Sed ista reditio incompleta est in sensu, . . . (*De Verit.*, 10, 9 resp.).

[78] St. Albert seems to have extended this knowledge to the perception of the movements of any of the interior powers, *De Somno et Vigilia*, I, 1, 2, B9.125a.

that the things which are seen are dreams, as discerning between things and the likenesses of things.[79]

This is the glory of the common sense as the common root and principle of the sense life, that which is term in the realm of pure sensibility, without which there could not be any sensation or any order of things sensible.

## III

Our inquiry has thus come to its conclusion; we should wish here to conclude its summary exposition as well, for men who have the philosophic temper and the *habitus* of metaphysics will realize quite well the significance of this mode of study.

Yet in our day there are many writers who find themselves in this case: they have not realized that in every enunciation the intellect expresses the exercise of an act of being; they have not realized that the thomistic metaphysics is always a metaphysics of things in function of their " to be," their *esse*, that is, in function of the exercise of that act; they have allowed themselves to be seduced into calling into doubt the existence of things in such wise that that existence would then have to be reconstructed by way of discovering an existence surely known in one case and thence proved successively for each given case. In these straits they postulate some sort of initial, primary, irreducible knowledge of " self " and call this knowledge an existential experience. This is a pure position, let us remark, and no amount of meditation thereon can give it the character of a rational evidence, for it contains no element of problem or of mystery. Like every pure position, however, it may be used: indeed, it would seem that it is with the use in view that the postulate has been formed. From this " experience " of " existence " are deduced variously categories of being, existence of the world of sense, and divers other things. The whole system of

[79] Si autem motus vaporis fuit modicus, non solum imaginatio remanet libera, sed etiam ipse sensus communis ex parte solvitur; ita quod homo judicat interdum in dormiendo, ea quae videt, somnia esse, quasi dijudicans inter res et rerum similitudines. Sed tamen ex aliqua parte remanet sensus communis ligatus (S. Thomae, *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 84, a. 8 ad 2).

deductions is called, not too happily, an existential metaphysic. In a way, then, we are forced to add a further word.

It should be evident that at the same time we have been studying the common sense as term of the order of pure sensibility, an induction has been going on, which, though conducted through relatively few instances, has not been incomplex. Perhaps we should suggest the following principles which may not have remained altogether implicit at the conclusion even of that partial induction:

1. Of knowledges specified within the same order of cognoscibility, one of which is as principle and the other as term, the reflexivity appropriate to the given order of knowledge is realized in that knowledge which is term, in function of its being term.

2. Of knowledges so related as principle and term, the terminal knowledge is term in function of the object in the exercise of the ultimate act of that order of things cognoscible.

3. The reflexivity realized in that knowledge which is term exists in function of the object in the exercise of the ultimate act of that order of things cognoscible.

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# THE RÔLE OF THE IMAGINATION IN THE MAKING OF POETRY

THERE are two classes of men to whom the rôle of the imagination in the making of poetry is a question of particular interest. Poets and philosophers and, within this latter group, psychologists and aestheticists especially, find this problem peculiarly their own.

Who shall say which group has shed more light upon the subject? Poets speak from the lonely tower of experience; philosophers, from the stout stronghold of observation and analysis. We look to poets to provide, above all, the matter for the study of this question; to philosophers, to contribute principles and technique. The word of the poet glows with the warm radiance of experimental knowledge but may blind rather than enlighten us; that of the philosopher has the steady brilliance which flows from ultimate principles but its impersonal beam may touch on truth alone and leave beauty in darkness and reality in shadow.

The illumination that Scholastic philosophers have turned on the subject has come more from the field of aesthetics than from the field of psychology, more from speculation than from observational and experimental studies. There is indeed a remarkable lack of any particular concern with this specific problem by Scholastic experimental psychologists.

Among philosophers outside the circle of Scholasticism a certain unbalanced glorification of the imagination is observable and obtains in our own day, since we find that such men as Frederick Clark Prescott of Cornell view the imagination as superior to any other knowing faculty of the mind. In the case of Prescott, he not only contends that "pure poetry uses the method of mere imagination throughout and deals entirely with images"[1] but he accepts Theodule Ribot's quasi-scientific

[1] Frederick C. Prescott, *The Poetic Mind* (New York: Macmillan, 1922), p. 44. (By permission of the Macmillan Company, publishers.)

explanation why "imaginative," "poetic" thought is the peer among cognitive activities.

> . . . associative, imaginative, poetic thought is the primary one [mode of thought]: it is older, and was indeed presumably once our only mode of thinking. From this, voluntary thought [referred to as reason elsewhere in the same chapter] has grown, by a specialization and adaptation with our growth in civilization; it therefore is the secondary one in the historical and scientific sense.[2]

The poet, when he treats the subject directly, may fail to give us a satisfying insight into the rôle of the imagination in the creation of poetry. This is especially surprising to the layman. Certainly the poet of all people ought to know! Perhaps he does and his ill success in making us understand is due to our defect rather than to his insufficiency. Our poverty of aesthetic appreciation and our want of creative achievement place us beyond the reach of his voice so that we know to the bitter full the aptness of that old Irishism, "Sure, Oi understand ye but Oi don't know what ye main." On the other hand, the fault may lie with the poet. He may be trained to observation but not to introspection; he may be a master in synthesizing a cosmos and an amateur in analyzing the circumscribed world of his own mind. Further, even if he is skilled in the science of reflection, he may, through lack of a scientific vocabulary or from habit and preference, turn to the language of poetry to describe the poetic experience. Moreover, if he does elect the use of familiar psychological terms, he may do so without definition and with tantalizing equivocation.

It can be safely said that, in modern times, poets as a class have tended to overemphasize the rôle of the imagination in the making of poetry. They have done this chiefly in their theoretical writings, whether in prose or in poetry, using reason (strange paradox!) to demonstrate its own inferiority. One can see two causes for this: one philosophical, a misunderstanding of the nature of the imagination; the other, psychological, the pleasure and potency of a rich and active imagination causing its possessor to confuse obtrusiveness with importance

[2] *Idem.*, p. 53.

and to identify pleasure with value. The imagination is the Edwin Booth of the cognitive faculties, elbowing its engaging and jealous way to the centre of the field of consciousness.

Yet there is the charm of humility in the way in which poets not only submit to the tyranny of the material in their mental life but actually delight in it. They do not seem to be conscious of the fettering of the intelligence by the imagination. For them the material, the individual, is symbolic in a way they find difficult to explain. What philosophers seek in *being*, poets find in *things*. Meaning, value, purpose,—these all lie intimately at hand. The philosopher interprets reality in terms of truth: the poet, in terms of beauty. If the temptation of the philosopher is to regret the influence of the imagination on the intellect and to rebel against the materiality of his knowledge, the poet's pitfall is to be so won by the imagination as to acknowledge it as the sovereign of his mind and to be jealous of any other claimant to superiority.

In Coleridge, we see both philosophical and psychological influences at work on his theory of the imagination. He did not use the term to denote that "power of representing to the mind, in a concrete way [by reproduction or recombination], things which have already been perceived by the senses but are no longer present."[3] No, Coleridge used the same word to signify something quite different. Gifted as he was with an extraordinarily keen, rich, creative imagination, he was drawn to overstress the importance of this power in mental life. But his divinization of the imagination was due not so much to the overpowering strength and unbalanced development of this faculty as to his misconception of its very nature. Based on his pantheistic conception of the universe as a living unity permeated by the divine intelligence,[4] Coleridge's theory of the imagination absorbed into that term the activities of emotion

[3] Robert E. Brennan, *General Psychology* (New York: Macmillan, 1937), p. 186. (By permission of the Macmillan Company, publishers.)

[4] Samuel T. Coleridge, "Destiny of Nations," *Poetical Works* (London: Macmillan, 1903), pp. 71, 78. (By permission of the Macmillan Company, publishers.) "Eolian Harp," *idem.*, p. 49.

and memory, intellect and will, and seems to hint at the capacity of the imagination for enjoying the mystical. What he calls the "primary imagination" is a kind of instrument for tuning in on the mental life of the Divine, it is "the living Power and prime Agent of all human Perception . . . a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM." [5]

On the other hand, Keats' worship of the imagination, from what one can glean from his letters and poems, was due more to psychological than to philosophical causes. He had, he professed, "never yet been able to perceive how anything can be known for truth by consecutive reasoning." [6] Such would not satisfy him. He was, like Holofernes, "caught by his eyes," not by the external senses so much as by that greater, though yet sensory, inner vision of things that are and may be. His cry of "O for a life of sensations rather than of thoughts!" [7] in the light of its context was not really a declaration in favor of sensuality but a confession of preference for "the simple imaginative mind" [8] which gives us "a shadow of reality to come." [9]

Therefore, when the poet extols the value of the imagination, contrasting it with reason to reason's disadvantage, we want to find out, first of all, if he is really talking about the imagination or is merely using that homely term to cover some other meaning. Perhaps he has elected it to represent all intuitive knowledge as opposed to reasoning, or chosen it, as Shelley seems to have done in his *Defence of Poetry*, to designate the synthetic as contrasted with the analytic activities of the mind—to the disparagement of the latter.

The genesis of this vogue for glorifying the imagination is a historical question which need not concern us here. Surely, materialism plays a part in it for the coronation of the imagination demands the dethronement of reason, to which, it would seem, any other cognitive power is to be preferred. But it is possible, too, that some impetus to this trend may have been

[5] *Biographia Literaria*, Bk. XIII (London: George Bell, 1898), p. 144.

[6] Letter to Benjamin Bailey, Nov. 22, 1817. *The Letters of John Keats*, ed. M. B. Forman (Oxford U. Press, 1931), I, 71.

[7] *Loc. cit.* [8] *Loc. cit.* [9] *Loc. cit.*

received from such misrepresentations of the teaching of "the Latines" as that of Thomas Hobbes.

> For after the object is removed or the eye shut, we still retain an image of the thing seen, though more obscure than we see it. And this it is the Latines call Imagination from the image made in seeing. . . . Imagination, therefore, is nothing but *decaying sense.*[10]

Such an exposition is provocative in that it may turn philosophers to redefinition and poets to restitution. In any case, both have acted much as though there were a concerted campaign to give imagination its due and a little more.

*Poetic Conception*

A poem expresses, as man alone can do, an experience man alone can know. The mysteries which surround man's nature, the oneness of his personality and the duality of his powers, enter in here so that the genesis of a poem will have its own inscrutable secrets. Which is not an insinuation that poetry follows paths above the reach of nature but an admission that it does walk those human ways which are seldom and little known.

A poem may be years in the making. Though quickly conceived it may be slowly written. The thousands of lines in *The Ring and the Book* which Browning outlined in a day took him several years of systematically planned work to develop in full. Again, material may be gathered from several sources over a period and slowly matured in the mind until one culminating circumstance seems to synthesize all these elements into one complete and startlingly integral whole. Thus it was with Goethe's prose work on *Werther*. His reading of English literature with its "earnest melancholy," his own real or fancied trials, his youth and romantic habits and his neurotic toying with the idea of self-murder, were all reduced to one unified experience and given shocking objectivity by the suicide of his acquaintance, Jerusalem.[11] The same Goethe whose work *Die*

[10] *Leviathan,* Pt. I, Ch. 2 (Oxford: Thornton, 1881), pp. 6-7.
[11] *Autobiography,* Bk. XIII (Boston: Cassino, 1882), II, 160.

*Novelle* rid him, as he told Eckermann, of a subject which he had carried about with him for thirty years,[12] also wrote at times with hurried feverishness, standing at his desk, reaching for a pencil instead of a quill lest the scratching of the latter slow his hand and cause him to lose his poem before he could imprison it on paper. This experience has been shared by others. Enjoyment of beauty brought an almost immediate response from Keats. After a Sunday walk during which he was cheered by the kind September weather, he decided he "never liked a stubble field so much as now—Aye better than the chilly green of Spring."[13] To him who suffered so much from the cold it looked invitingly warm "in the same way that some pictures look warm" and he went home gratefully to put this impression into the poem, *To Autumn.*

However brief or long the preparatory period may be, all that we know of mental processes suggests that the synthetic act whereby a poem, or a part of a poem, arises whole and lovely in the mind is a rapid and even instantaneous process—like opening the eyes and *seeing*, seeing that which, though before us, was hidden but a moment ago. Suddenly, where there was nothing like it before, there is now—well, what Goethe would call a *motiv*, a subject so meaningful it must be given words, a story so beautiful it must be told, a value so compelling all must hear of it. Sometimes before this takes place the poet is conscious of groping painfully towards his goal like a man feeling his way along a dark tunnel. Then suddenly there is a turn in the passage and light lies ahead. At other times this is as effortless as waking to find the morning sunshine stretched pleasantly on the bedroom floor.

Whether a poem comes quickly or slowly to birth, a not inconsiderable history lies behind it. For even when things happen suddenly they are not excused from being in debt to a cause for their arrival and, further—as to the genus of that cause—where nature gives a half-accounting for effects it is

[12] Eckermann, *Gespräche mit Goethe,* Jan. 15, 1827. h. A. Bartels (Leipzig: Diederich's, 1902), I, 250.

[13] Letter to John Hamilton Reed, Sept. 21, 1819. *Letters of John Keats,* II, 418.

wiser to accept her reticent word than to go beyond her for an explanation. Is it not multiplying causes beyond necessity to maintain that in this matter a special Divine impulse on the functioning point of the soul is required and to attribute to grace activities which do not transcend nature? To hold that the gift of poetry is made by way of nature rather than by way of grace is not to account it any less God's own. Have we yet made an exhaustive study of human nature? Have we realized all the problems of the human mind, much less, solved them all? Have we considered, for example, the rôle of the *vis cogitativa*, that sensible counterpart of the intellect, in regard to the perception of the beautiful or the making of a work of art? It apprehends an aspect of sensible things which entirely eludes the grasp of both the proper senses and the common sense. Some intentionality in sensible things which conveys their value for the knowing subject is susceptible to the *vis cogitativa* which, therefore, in a sense, judges of material values. Beauty is a value and the beautiful in sensible things has features which, when apprehended, become efficient on the sensory as well as on the intellectual level. It is improbable that the *vis cogitativa* which, in a certain manner, pronounces on sensible values, would have no rôle in the perception of the beautiful.

It is strange that, although many poets and even critics are loath to allow the spiritual its rôle in the making of poetry, some of them permit themselves the luxury of leaning towards the Platonic appeal to the supernatural for the source of its inspiration. As far as the act of synthesis is concerned, is not "inspiration" in poetry a parallel to discovery in the physical sciences? At least, all that we read of and by poets convinces us that the adage of Pasteur that chance favors only the prepared mind has its implications in the creation of poetry. An experience which is objectively the same is subjectively different. What happens to a group is transformed by each one of them into an entirely different reality merely by being experienced, by being subjected to the laws and conditions of each incommunicable personality. The same scene, the same event,

will not evoke the same response in two people. And there is a preparation for the poetic response in which both temperament and training have place.

The making of a poem involves a perception of the beautiful, a choice of a medium for expression and the actual use of this medium.

What part does the imagination play in these several steps? This we can know only from observation and analysis, coming to our conclusions with caution since our efforts to understand may change and distort that which we examine.

The imagination may be the faculty in which the poetic experience is actually begun. Or it may play a secondary and supplementary part in this initiation. All perception is cognition. Perception of beauty may have its initial act in the external senses or in the internal senses, the memory and the imagination, although it necessarily has its culminating and essential act in the intellect. Beauty as beauty is beyond the perceptive grasp of any sensory power. In the same way, therefore, the poetic experience may be initiated in any of the cognitive faculties, the imagination included. "Mood," compounded of feeling and emotion, serves as a background, a kind of condition *sine qua non* for this activity, so that the materials which the cognitive powers provide are welded into the form of poetry by the fire of emotion and the shaping force of both the sensory and the intellectual appetite.

In those cases where the poetic experience begins in the external senses, a something seen or heard—a landscape, or a single significant object, a symphony or a lonely bird call—may begin the process. Goethe's *Die Laune des Verliebten* grew out of his encountering, on a spring day, two names cut into a linden tree, his own done more than a year before and, above it, Aennchen's, carved the autumn past when he was most in love with her. The strong running sap was welling out of the freshly cut letters of Aennchen's name and dropping like tears over his own. To the young Goethe this little pantomine in nature symbolized Aennchen's sorrow and his cruelty and summed up their whole relationship. He was not long in turn-

ing this incident into an idyl which he said he "never could read to himself without affection or to others without emotion." [14] At another time, drawings and engravings from the Leipzig collection, which Oeser had arranged to have Goethe see in the hope of winning him to emulation, turned him instead to compose poetry about them.[15]

There are many poems which hint at a similar origin. Something perceived, especially something seen, is the first point from which a subtle progress to poetry begins. Thomas Hardy's *On the Portrait of a Woman about to be Hanged*,[16] Wilfrid Gibson's *The Paisley Shaul*[17] and G. W. Russell's *An Irish Face*[18] are illustrative.

In such instances the imagination, although preceded in the order of time by the activity of the external senses, is a potent supplementary factor in the very operation of sense perception, even before it enters in as the faculty which "takes over," as it were, the data which the senses provide in order to change, supplement and complete them—its own proper activity. On the sensory level there is also a synthesizing and perfecting of these revised data.

Every sensation save the first one is a whole which is greater than the sum of its parts. In the registration of every sensation a further force is at work which affects, as we know from common experience and experimental studies, the very data of sensation itself. A something else, the imagination, insinuates itself between the stimulus and the conscious impression so that the former is not the adequate cause of the latter. It is a commonplace which we accept unreflectingly that we react to sensory stimuli not as to individual sensations but as to an experience related to our total mental life. This relation of new things to old is possible only if the old are retained in some form: this retention of sensory experience and its recall under the form of images for the use of the individual is the specific function of the imagination.

[14] *Autobiography*, Bk. VII, I, 231. [15] *Idem.*, p. 260.

[16] *Chief Modern Poets of England and America*, ed. G. DeW. Sanders & J. H. Nelson (New York: Macmillan, 1936), p. 35.

[17] *Idem.*, p. 245. [18] *Idem.*, p. 127.

Perceptible, particularly visible objects—persons, places and things—are not perceived simply as revealed to senses endowed with acuity. Visual perception, for example, is not photographic. The imagination spontaneously intensifies, emphasizes, certain features of a perception so as to make them exceptionally vivid, involuntarily neglects others. Moreover, it has a synthetic influence on sense data, outdoing the eye to see a landscape as a whole, the ear to grasp a symphony as a unity.

When its own proper work is begun, stimulated but not limited by the sensory data received, the imagination supplies what is defective in the object by recalling other images to supplement it, achieving a sort of transformation of reality which makes it seem the very essence of the real since, lacking the imperfections of the real, it is more expressive of the underlying form. Where elements that are unimportant, fragmentary or mean enter into the real, they can only be dismissed and substituted for with the aid of the imagination. Prescinding from the question whether it is great poetry or not, Alfred Noyes' story of *The Highwayman* [19] gives us, in both the highwayman and his love, figures bereft of the shabbiness with which life most certainly would endow them. Their moral ugliness hidden by the glory which attends all, even mistaken, selflessness, their rescue from sordidness is further due partially to the technique of omission and partially to the suggestion of brave beauty conveyed to us by the mention that the highwayman wore his clothes with an air and "a bunch of lace at his chin" and the landlord's blackeyed daughter "plaited a dark red love-knot into her long black hair."

Poets are not interested in the real in the same way that scientists are. They are trained observers but they are in search more for the possible than for the actual. They reverence the real for what it is but even more for what it suggests. Further, nature is apt to be seen in the poet's own reflection and he in nature's, both his imagination and his emotion doing much to determine the objects and the details of which he is most conscious, to which he will give his attention to the neglect of

[19] *Idem.*, p. 284.

other things. Since he sees an aspect or detail of nature as a symbol of some personal experience, he uses that very aspect or detail to convey the same impression to others. In Dante Gabriel Rossetti's *Silent Noon* we see that his whole consciousness is devoted to just those things in nature which, insignificant and trifling in themselves, are great in their significance for him. They represent and speak his own mood. They are a picture of a psychic experience which escapes direct expression and which can only be discovered by the medium of some concrete likeness to it.

> Deep in the sun-searched growths the dragon-fly
> Hangs like a blue thread loosened from the sky:—
> So this wing'd hour is dropt to us from above.[20]

The poetic experience, instead of reaching the imagination as the second step in its progress, may begin in that faculty. Poems that originate in dreams are of this type. After reading a sentence from *Purchas his Pilgrimes*, Coleridge fell asleep and three hours later awoke from a dream with the material and the form of *Kubla Kahn* already shaped in his mind,—"if that indeed can be called composition in which all the images arose up before him as *things*, with a parallel production of the correspondent expressions without any sensation or consciousness of effort." [21] Due to an interruption, he failed to put the whole of this evanescent experience into words before it escaped him. Poems of this type have a fascination properly their own. Since dreams do not follow the laws of reality, neither do they. They seem to set the world we know at naught and to establish another order which mystifies and charms us.

The unnamed poem of Keats beginning "As Hermes once . . ." also had its origin in a dream which followed on his absorption in the subject of Paolo and Francesca as treated in Dante's fifth canto. He wrote of this dream to his brother and sister-in-law, George and Georgiana Keats, as

[20] *Poems* (Boston: Roberts, 1882), p. 137.

[21] Coleridge's note, *Poetical Works* (London: Macmillan, 1903), p. 592. (By permission of the Macmillan Company, publishers.)

. . . one of the most delightful enjoyments I ever had in my life. I floated about the whirling atmosphere as it is described with a beautiful figure to whose lips mine were joined as it seemed for an age—and in the midst of all this cold and darkness I was warm—even flowery tree tops sprang up and we rested on them, sometimes with the lightness of a cloud, till the wind blew us away again. I tried a sonnet upon it—there are fourteen lines, but nothing of what I felt in it—O that I could dream it every night— [22]

This poem in which Keats sends his spirit to

> . . . that second circle of sad hell
> Where in the gust, the whirlwind and the flaw
> Of rain and hailstones lovers need not tell
> Their sorrows.

gives in its closing lines an exact rendering of this dreamed experience,—save that its whole feeling tone is changed. It is interesting to see how Keats thus paid tribute to the laws of reality by using the cognitive but not the conative or affective content of the dream. By the omission of any mention of his own emotions and the introduction of "sorrows" and "melancholy" Keats has made a poem the mood of which is not at variance with its theme. In a dream, a lover might delight in his existence in "the second circle of sad hell" but not so, in reality.

All poems which have their origin in the imagination are not dream-born. A non-existent situation may be conjured up in which the poet seeks some kind of solace or satisfaction. Those highly subjective poems, of which there are a score in modern times, in which poets imagine the establishment of a new relation between themselves and their loves by the intervention of death, are illustrative. They say, in their several ways, what Sara Teasdale says in hers,

> When I am dead and over me bright April
> Shakes out her rain-drenched hair,
> Though you should lean over me broken-hearted
> I shall not care.[23]

[22] Letter to George and Georgiana Keats, April 15, 1819. *Letters of John Keats*, II, 352.

[23] Sara Teasdale, "I Shall Not Care," *Collected Poems* (New York: Macmillan, 1937), p. 60. (By permission of the Macmillan Company, publishers.)

The poetic experience may begin in the memory. An event of the past may serve as the initial step.

On the day that the battle of Gravelotte was fought, Thomas Hardy and Emma Lavinia Gifford, his future wife, were reading Tennyson together in a rectory garden in Cornwall. The contrast of war news with the quiet rural scene in the valley before him made a deep impression on Hardy. This was long, long years before the World War during which Hardy wrote *In Time of " The Breaking of Nations,"* [24] a poem of Tennysonian compression in which the impressions of the day were tersely recorded. Of it Hardy said, "'The Breaking of Nations' contains a feeling that moved me in 1870, during the Franco-Prussian war, when I chanced to be looking at such an agricultural incident in Cornwall." [25] Again, after his first wife's death, Hardy remembered how, not long before the end, she took it into her head to sit down at the piano and run through a number of her favorite melodies, leaving off with the remark that she would never play again. She never did and Hardy, in *The Last Performance*,[26] "approximately [interesting word!] describes this incident." [27]

Much more acid than Hardy's war poem are those which sprang from the bitter memories of one who took active part in the fighting of 1914 and after. Siegfried Sassoon's *Prelude—The Troops* [28] and *They* [29] speak the burning thoughts of one who cannot forget.

In contrast to these, the memories of childhood have their own peculiar vividness and particular delight which make them suitable material for poetry whether in the form of reminiscence like Walter De La Mare's *Susan* [30] or in the guise of personation like Robert Louis Stevenson's *My Shadow*.[31]

[24] *Chief Modern Poets of England and America*, p. 25.

[25] Florence Emily Hardy, *The Later Years of Thomas Hardy* (London: Macmillan, 1930), p. 178. (By permission of the Macmillan Company, publishers.)

[26] *Poetical Works of Thomas Hardy* (London: Macmillan, 1920), p. 457. (By permission of the Macmillan Company, publishers.)

[27] *The Later Years of Thomas Hardy*, p. 153.

[28] *Chief Modern Poets of England and America*, p. 328.

[29] *Idem.*, pp. 328-9.

[30] *Idem.*, p. 173.

[31] *Poems and Ballads* (New York: Scribner's, 1919), p. 19.

Autobiographical, like historical subjects, are not factual records. As Goethe remarks,[32] although the poet's facts may be historical, his characters are not and cannot be. Gifted with a rich, vigorous and highly pictorial imagination and with a good store of common sense to boot, Goethe thought the poet should begin with *given* material. The invention of imaginary characters, plots and situations was, for him, work wasted. There already existed in abundance subjects in history, literature and life from which any kind of *motiv* could be selected and then turned over to the mind for development independently of the facts.

The intellect itself may be so absorbed or so puzzled by a problem, so possessed by a conviction, so struck by some insight into the meaning and purpose and value of life, that it then turns to imagery and words to express itself. The realization, not simply the recognition, that " all things are passing," which St. Teresa stated with such simplë but musical directness in her *Eficacia de la Paciencia*, has given us two poems of very different quality by two women of the twentieth century, the *Tears*[33] of Lizette Woodworth Reese and *L'Envoi*[34] of Willa Cather. Convinced that " life and its few years " are but " a wisp of fog between us and the sun," Miss Reese wrote with hope as well as out of need, asking to

> . . . see aright
> How each has back what once he stayed to weep,
> Homer his sight, David his little lad.[33]

Miss Cather's conception, on the other hand, is one of joyless finality.

> No matter whose the eyes that I would keep
> Near in the dark, Tis in the eyes of Sleep
> That I must look and look forevermore
> When once I am alone and shut the door.[34]

[32] Eckermann, *Gespräche mit Goethe,* Jan. 31, 1827, I, 286-7.

[33] Lizette W. Reese, " Tears," *Selected Poems* (New York: Doran, 1926), p. 82. (Copyright 1926, and reprinted by permission of Farrar & Rinehart, Inc., publishers.)

[34] Willa Cather, *April Twilights* (New York: Knopf, 1933), p. 44. (With permission of the publishers.)

In the first poem, the "*toda se pasa*" theme is expressed in varied and successive images which share but these two notes in common—ephemerality and beauty. In the second, the images are associative and cumulative. Darkness, Silence, Night, Loneliness and eternal Sleep are the only enduring loves yet with us when "once we are alone and shut the door."

There are probably more poems of this type than is generally realized. It has been the fashion to identify predominantly intellectual with didactic poetry whereas the latter is but one among many types of the former. And its purpose, to instruct rather than to delight, militates against its being ranked high among the others—whether reflective, philosophical or religious.

Nor need these poems be highly subjective although some are. Goethe, youthful but maturing, was

> never weary of reflecting upon the transient nature of attachments, the mutability of human character, moral sensuality, and all the heights and depths, the combination of which in our nature may be considered as the riddle of human life. Here too I sought to get rid of what troubled me in a song, an epigram, in some kind of rhyme; which, since they referred to the most private feelings and the most peculiar circumstances, could scarcely interest any one but myself.[36]

One of the longest and greatest poems of this kind is the *Divina Commedia* of Dante Alighieri. By contrast in length is a brief one of our own time, Robert Frost's *The Road Not Taken*,[36] an allegory in which the gift and burden of choice are celebrated. The problem of the meaning and purpose of life is the *motiv* for two very different poems in both of which the authors find the answer to their questioning in a bird. To Ralph Hodgson, *The Linnet*[37] gives a rational basis for his faith; to Thomas Hardy, *The Darkling Thrush*[68] holds out a hint of hope.

In poems of this nature things which come under the senses are made to stand as symbols for those which do not, for

[35] *Autobiography*, Bk. VII, I, 238.
[36] *Chief Modern Poets of England and America*, p. 467.
[37] *Idem.*, p. 153. [38] *Idem.*, p. 13.

spiritual or for supernatural realities and for conscious states so fugitive, complex and deep as to defy direct analysis and immediate expression. But the imagination does not merely supply the concrete imagery in which to dress the thought. It is like a good saleswoman who, sent to find one suitable gown, comes back with ten. The activity of the imagination may thus stimulate the intellect to fresh activity, to a new line of thought. In fact, abetted by the emotions, it may lose its ancillary rôle and, by the beauty and variety of the imagery it offers, coax the mind away from its original intention. Goethe experienced this when, treating the subject of Götz von Berlichingen, he destroyed the unity of this work by allowing his attention to be drawn after the imagined Adelheid to the neglect of Götz. Situations in which she figured prominently and in which Götz had no part came to his mind and he enlarged upon them. Only later, on rereading the work, did he realize how much he had weakened it by this lack of purposefulness. This is only one illustration of the frequent necessity for the restraint which the imagination demands and which it cannot impose on itself. It cannot moderate or direct its activity in view of a purpose. It has no means properly its own by which it can be guided or held in check. This must be done by the higher powers, the intellect and the will. Keats, in one of his flashes of humor, referred to this in regard to his *La Belle Dame Sans Merci*.

> And then I shut her wild, wild eyes
> With kisses four—

Why four kisses—you will say—why four, because I wished to restrain the headlong impetuosity of my Muse—she would faine have said ' score ' without hurting the rhyme—but we temper the Imagination, as the Critics say, with Judgment. I was obliged to choose an even number, that both eyes might have fair play, and to speak truly I think two a piece quite sufficient.[39]

In whatever faculty the poetic experience begins, the imagination must enter into its development. It enriches, simplifies, transforms material received from the exterior senses without

[39] Letter to George and Georgiana Keats, April 18 or 19, 1819, *Letters*, II, 356-7.

robbing it of its objective character. It performs its own proper work of recalling and recombining images to supplement and even to supplant the products of sensation and it may be the faculty in which the poetic experience is not only elaborated but actually begun. A poem that has its genesis in the intellect owes, by strict necessity, its subsequent development to the coöperation of the imagination.

In the apprehension of beauty in material things present to the mind by way either of perceptive intuition or imaginative recall, the exercise of the imagination is necessary; for the expression of beauty perceived even in non-material things—for example, in logical reasoning or in moral order—imaginative activity is likewise indispensable. But in no case is the formal act of the perception of beauty due to the imagination. This belongs to the intellect alone for beauty is a value and value is an aspect of being, the formal object of the intellect. In what way the *vis cogitativa* intervenes as an intermediary between the imagination and the intellect in this particular cognitive activity will not be touched on in the present article. It must suffice us to say that, from all that we can learn from St. Thomas concerning its coöperation in abstraction as well as in practical judgment, its apprehension of an intentionality in sensible objects which escapes all the other senses—all these facts indicate its probable importance, as the highest of man's sensory powers in the process under consideration here. That the perception of beauty as beauty belongs to the intellect is hinted at, somewhat to our surprise, in the words of Keats who knew at first hand those "innumerable compositions and decompositions which take place between the intellect and its thousand materials before it arrives at that trembling, delicate and snail-horn perception of beauty." [40]

Many subtle intimations from observation and introspection suggest that when the mind is dealing with material objects there is a greater extrinsic dependence of the intellect on the imagination in the discovery of beauty than in the apprehension of intelligible species. A sensory presentation or representation

[40] Letter to Benjamin R. Haydon, April 8, 1818, *idem.*, I, 139.

which amounts to a rough schematization and sketchy simplification seems to be sufficient in the former case, insufficient in the latter. In the act of intuition whereby the human mind sees beauty in material things, the significant form is perceived not only in common but also in signate matter so as to be revealed by it. It is in *this* concrete thing as represented in the mind that the form must not be merely recognized but so readily and clearly perceived that the mind immediately assents to its delightfulness and the will joys therein. For this a certain fullness, qualitative rather than quantitative, is required of the sensible representation.

*Poetic Expression*

Is a wordless poem possible? If it is not, what is that something which is in the mind of the poet before he puts it into words? Sometimes in that infra-rational or post-rational intuition by which a poem stands, as it were, whole in the mind of its author, words too are given; at other times the poet struggles to find words to utter the realization which he has come to possess without their entire or even partial support. Then he must cast about him in the manner of that man who wrote "Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?" and weigh the suitability of such figures, "Thou art more lovely and more temperate."

Until the poet has the words he has no poem, only an experience which he wants to express and share with others. To do this he has at his disposal the medium of words and to do it well he must actualize them as near to all their possibilities as he can. Words are not only the means of poetic expression; they are an integral part of poetry.

Our words have no pitch save that which is lent them in speech by the human voice but they have their own evident and proper timbre (if one may use that term) due to the quality of their combined vowels and consonants. This quality must not be at variance with the mood of the poem and should be in accord with it.

The word which the poet chooses to speak for him will be

read by another who will have: 1) a visual perception of the word which will evoke, 2) a sound image of the spoken word, 3) the meaning of the word and 4) some concrete image or images, visual or otherwise, associated with the meaning. For example, we have a visual perception of the letters M-a-r-y and, so closely associated with it in time we cannot detect any successiveness whatever, an image of the sound it signifies. Meaning stands there too, not explicitly formulated perhaps—"Virgin Mother of God"—but obviously the basis for the Madonna images which attend it.

There is an effective use of sound in the following italicized lines in which images have a double rôle, flanking, as it were, meaning on either side with reciprocal action and reaction. The visual images emphasize the meaning, the meaning gives value to the sound images which, in turn, enrich the visual images.

> White sky, over the hemlocks bowed with snow
> Saw you not at the beginning of evening the antlered buck and his doe
> Standing in the apple-orchard? I saw them. I saw them suddenly go,
> Tails up, *with long leaps, lovely and slow.*[41]

In reading this the voice is slowed up by the long vowels and softened by the liquescents; the sounds suggest the long easy motion of the deer. But we need not read the phrase aloud to be struck by this quality. The words that symbolize these sounds evoke their images in our minds. There remains the problem:—how can sound images be imitative of a motion which is not auditorily but visually perceptible? We can readily understand how some words, being directly imitative of the sounds they symbolize, actually evoke their images—words like hiss, roar, cheep. But each type of sensation is *sui generis*, irreducible to any other type. A recognition of a certain fitness of the qualities of one sensation to represent the character of

[41] Edna St. V. Millay, *The Buck in the Snow and Other Poems* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1935), p. 28. (Copyright, 1928, by Edna St. Vincent Millay.) (Italics mine.)

another is therefore demanded. This presupposes an apprehension of meaning and demands an appreciation of relationships so that the imitative value of the sound, while it does reinforce the significance of the word, does not precede it and is not independent of it. It requires, too, a high degree of imagery. One who has never seen and remembered those great unhurried arcs made by a fleeing deer will not be able to create their analogical representation in sound.

Emotions, unlike cognitions, can be immediately suggested by sounds, for some sonants, like gestures and facial expressions, arise directly and naturally from emotions and therefore express them. In proportion as words approximate these are they representative of emotions and provocative of those images which each individual has variously associated with such states. Words of this nature have more power to provoke imagery than to direct it. Facts now available to us do not justify the assertion that certain specific sounds constitute a universal mode of expressing definite emotions. Within certain language groups such sounds are patient of a similar interpretation.

The appropriateness of sounds to express meanings, therefore, depends on their direct imitativeness—possible only when they symbolize sounds—or on their analogical quality or on their origin. Either they have a capacity to represent immediately, either univocally or analogically, some characteristic of the image they evoke or, having their source in emotion, they bear the mark of their origin.

The beauty of those auditory images in which we revel has, we may well suspect, little value when separated from meaning. How much would we enjoy sounds of like quality in an unknown language? How much pleasure would we take in long vowels and liquids skillfully distributed among nonsense syllables? These sounds that seem to glow and burn and breathe take their music from meaning.

The hush that pervades the whole conversation sketched by Robert Frost in *The Death of the Hired Man* [42] rises more from

[42] *Chief Modern Poets of England and America*, p. 462.

our grasp of the whole situation, our visualization of the homely moonlit scene on the farmhouse porch and the peace-giving reflection spoken there that "home" is "something you somehow haven't to deserve" than from any direct apprehension of the sounds as soft and the tempo as slow and steady.

The fascination exercised by rhyme is due to the chiming of similar sound images, one not having left the field of consciousness before the other enters in. This association of the new sound image with the old both brings us pleasure and reinforces meaning as it serves as an instrument of emphasis. Why the echoing of sound images down the corridors of the mind should so please us we do not know. Beyond the purely material factors at work there remains the fact that the human mind loves and seeks unity, and rhyming is a mechanical means of effecting unity. The various lines of rhymed verse are brought into closer relationship by the sound similarity of their finals.

Neither do we know, in the related case of rhythm, why the regular recurrence of stress or of accent brings us delight. We recognize that it does, and again, that this delight is not due to sensory causes only. There is an ordering of sound which, the nearer it approaches in its mechanical rise and fall to the hierarchy of meaning, brings the more satisfaction. It is the intellect alone which can joy in this proportion, this order, which it alone can apprehend even in material things. It is dependent, however, on the imagination to keep before it the sound scheme in which this order is apprehended. The more complicated and varied the metrical pattern, the more coöperation is demanded of the imagination.

The eerie quality of Coleridge's *Christabel* is partially due, according to K. M. Wilson,[43] to emphasis which is logically incorrect, that is, to the occasional falling of mechanical stress on words other than those which are normally the most meaningful. Since we expect meaning to be emphasized, we unconsciously attribute an unusual significance to these stressed words. What this significance is we attempt to guess. The mind

[43] *The Real Rhythm in English Poetry* (Aberdeen: University Press, 1929), p. 14.

turns from one possible explanation to another as though impelled by some inner Iago who professes to see in commonplaces some dreadful message we have missed and who whispers, "See! Look there now. No. You've missed it again, your poor blind fool. Look again. Do you see now?"

The tempo of poetry has various explanations. A favorite has been to ascribe to types of metre in the abstract a rate of movement properly their own; to say, for example, that the smaller the number of accents the more rapidly the verse will run, so that dactyls and anapests effect rapid motion and are more suitable for light themes than iambics and trochees;[44] or, by a somewhat similar view, to contend that anapests and dactyls are metres expressive of motion, iambics and trochees, of reflection.[45] As to the first theory, the brief *Dance*[46] of James Stephens has seven syllables to the line, four of which are accented, three unaccented. Yet the poem has the swift whirl of a reel. As to the second, *The Wild Ride*[47] of Louise Imogene Guiney is written in ascending rhythm yet who can gainsay the effect of motion it produces? The tempos of metres are variously conceived because a metre in the abstract has no tempo. The adagios and largos of poetry are not due to iambs and trochees; nor are its andantes and allegros the result of dactyls and anapests. The meaning, the images and their associated emotions, the whole mood of a poem, sets its time so that if the theme be sad and heavy even if the metre is ascending the motion is not swift for, in any case, the tempo rests ultimately on meaning and therefore

> Time must go
> Ticking slow, glooming slow.[48]

Words are not mere sounds; they are also symbols which

[44] Edwin Guest, *History of English Rhythms* (London: Pickering, 1838), pp. 162-3.

[45] Julia Dabney, *The Musical Basis of Verse* (New York: Longmans Green, 1904), p. 66.

[46] *Chief Modern Poets of England and America*, p. 300.

[47] *Happy Ending* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1927), p. 73.

[48] Harold Monro, "London Interior," *Collected Poems* (London: Cobden-Sanderson, 1933), p. 158.

stand for ideas and for images. This imagery is the most delicate and the strongest of all the sensory instruments the poet uses to achieve his effect. A word, a phrase, he holds out to us as a tiny magic mirror into which we look and there discover a whole, living, moving, reflected world. The poet puts his experience into such words as will rouse and rule imagery.

Imagery aroused by words, rhythm found in words, these serve to give poetry its own particular and peculiar genius as one of the arts whereby, unlike music, it seems to arrest the fleeting and vanishing beauty of life and, unlike painting or sculpture, presents loveliness alive. As Shelley has said, poetry "marries . . . eternity and change."[49]

Imagery may grow, grow through developing a single picture by presenting it from many angles, each of which adds some fresh view to the whole. Imagery may shift and change, phantasms of altogether different character following one another, each with its own contribution to the knowledge of that which they represent—giving us new insight into a single truth or character or fact by representing or illustrating it in many different ways. Such is the imagery of Miss Reese's *Tears*.

Imagery may overabound, for the imagination is diffusive. Intellect and will must then select and reject among its products, give direction to and perhaps put a curb upon its action in view of the purpose it is to serve. It is an essential part of poetry; it is not the whole of poetry; it is not even the most important element in that highly complex art.

Frequently we are told that poetry's power over imagery presents objects to us "as if seen or as if heard." Patently this is either an absurdity or a mere manner of speaking which is, however, unsatisfactory and confusing. The exterior senses are in no way involved. The objects appear before the imagination in a peculiarly vivid way but this presentation has its own specific character which is immediately evident and which no normal person would confuse with the data of the external senses. Whether these images be auditory, visual, kinaesthetic or whatever else and however complete, satisfying and sharply

[49] *Defence of Poetry* (London: Frowde, 1910), p. 111.

defined, one cannot see the utility of calling them, as has been done, "pseudo-sensations." [50]

The poet uses terms more for suggestion than for exposition. With one single, well chosen word he may occasion more imaginative activity in our minds than a whole chapter of minute description could effect. Notice the provocative power of one word in the following lines.

> . . . a lovely wreath of girls
> Dancing their sleek hair into tangled curls.[51]

"Wreath" tells us the form of the dance and something of its spirit; it hints at beauty and freshness; it is associated with triumph and joy.

The most memorable and beautiful descriptions of people are those least detailed which, by some trick of suggestion, leave the mind free and ready to complete the full picture. Wilfrid Gibson's conception of Rupert Brooke is illustrative:

> Though now beyond earth's farthest hills you fare,
> Song-crowned, immortal, sometimes it seems to me
> That, if I listen very quietly,
> Perhaps I'll hear a light foot on the stair
> And see you, standing with your angel air,
> Fresh from the uplands of eternity.[52]

There are words here which are rich in reference—"song-crowned," "angel air," "uplands of eternity." For example, the wealth which has been poured into the word angel by instruction and reading, from painting and sculpture and our own serious thinking—all this is tapped and set flowing into our widening and deepening view of this unforgotten poet.

Many devices, figures of speech, are used to suggest imagery; the metaphor is the means *par excellence*. It is a highly concentrated form of figure and, with unrivaled economy, makes

[50] Othmar Sterzinger, "Die Gründe des Gefallens und Missfallens am poetischen Bilde," *Archiv f. Gesam. Psych.*, XXIX (1913), 16-91.

[51] John Keats, "Sleep and Poetry," *Works* (London: Turner, 1883), I, 93.

[52] Wilfrid Gibson, "Rupert Brooke," *Collected Poems* (New York: Macmillan, 1926), p. 333. (By permission of the Macmillan Company, publishers.)

words imply more than they are actually able to say. By means of the metaphor, objects familiar and commonplace are seen in so fresh and true a light as to have new worth; concepts of dwindling or negligible content receive new intentionality; depths as well as nuances of emotion beyond the reach of direct description are fittingly expressed; experiences are not simply related but shared. There is a strange fact here—some of the metaphors which linger longest in the mind actually defy the imagination to sum them up in a single image although, it is true, they may provoke a whole series of images. Lines of this type are found in many poems of vastly different character. Sara Teasdale has one such in *Barter*.[53]

> . . . children's faces looking up
> Holding wonder like a cup.

Indeed the imagery effected by the reading of poetry may be the furthest removed from eidetic; the mind may run on to the end of a poem so swiftly that no complete or, in a sense, adequate representation of any one image has been formed. This is but one of those facts which suggest to us that, however much poets themselves may deny it, the making and enjoyment of poetry seems to partake more than painting, sculpture or music of the intellectual, demanding primarily the recognition of relationships, the acute consciousness of analogies, of contrasts, of resemblances. It is the wonder of these rather than any specificity, richness, vividness of the images the poet evokes in our minds which most delights us.

Another fact that indicates the same truth is the way in which words, as the medium of poetry, operate. For the most part, they are arbitrary signs which do not, as the instruments of poetic art, directly stimulate the senses, either interior or exterior. True, they are either seen or heard but *as seen or heard* they do not initiate the aesthetic experience by acting first on an external sense and then on the imagination as music and painting do but only after their meaning has been grasped

[53] Sara Teasdale, "Barter," *Collected Poems* (New York: Macmillan, 1937), p. 115. (By permission of the Macmillan Company, publishers.)

by the intellect, only insofar as they are significant, do words act on the imagination. The exceptions to this we have already noted are those words which are directly imitative of sound or immediately and obviously derived from emotion.

The notes made here are scarcely more than short sallies into a great and haze-hung field. What the poet owes to his imagination in the making of a poem he himself hardly knows; we, certainly, know even less. The language of imagery is resorted to naturally to indicate the part it plays in the conception and expression of poetry. We want to say things about it which philosophical terms will not convey: that, to the poet, it is a portrait gallery, a house full of friends, a treasure under the sea waiting discovery, a hound on the scent of beauty.

In *The Tower*,[54] W. B. Yeats gives us both an insight into the debt which poets owe to the imagination and an insinuation as to its ancillary position to another and higher power of apprehension.

> I pace upon the battlements and stare
> On the foundations of a house, or where
> Tree, like a sooty finger, starts from the earth;
> And send imagination forth
> Under the day's declining beam, and call
> Images and memories
> From ruin or from ancient trees,
> For I would ask a question of them all.

And it is not the imagination which can satisfy the thirst of our whys and whats and wherebys.

*Conclusion*

Taking up the facts of poetry and examining them in the light of philosophical principles has this advantage: it is apt for bringing to our attention problems which would not present themselves in a more truly philosophical approach to the same subject. In considering the rôle of the imagination in the making of poetry, certain truths are brought home to us; others,

[54] William Butler Yeats, "The Tower," *Collected Poems* (London: Macmillan, 1933), p. 219. (By permission of the Macmillan Company, publishers.)

still in the distance and but half-recognized, invite us to seek them out and make their proper acquaintance. In the perception of beauty, as in the formation of the universal, the greatest point of interest and of mystery is the transition from the sensible to the intellectual, that clouded point of contact between matter and spirit. We know so little of this contact and yet it is one of the pivotal points of human mental life and one of the chief problems of human psychology.

Philosophically, the profound problem here centers about the interplay, the exchange, between two different orders of being, the material and the spiritual. Spirit being what it is and matter what it is, it is no intellectual burden to admit that "sensible knowledge is not the total and perfect cause of intellectual knowledge";[55] we feel a little fretted, however, to allow to the lower, material causality in relation to the higher, and grant it only "in a way."[56]

We know that from material things man's knowledge is ultimately derived. This knowledge, in its upward sweep from the first impingement of stimuli on the external sensory organs to the peak of intellectual apprehension, is progressively dematerialized, even in its passage through powers that are sensory. In the formation of the universal the task of preparing the phantasm for the active intellect belongs to the imagination. From the phantasm, the active intellect, by an act of abstraction from particular conditions, makes the potentially intelligible species actually intelligible so that it may be truly understood by the passive intellect. Further, for the actual understanding of its proper object, the intellect must not only abstract the species from the phantasm but refer it back to the same.

In the perception of the beautiful in material things, unlike the apprehension of universals, there is no act of formal abstraction. The whole mind is concentrated, each power according to its proper mode, on the object of its contemplation, each power

[55] *Summa Theologica*, I, q. 84, a. 6. ". . . it cannot be said that sensible knowledge is the total and perfect cause of intellectual knowledge, but rather that it is in a way the material cause."

[56] *Idem.*

apprehending it in its own way, with a consequent delight. The same features in the object which are the material cause for the intellectual grasp of beauty, operate to effect its analogical counterpart in the higher sensory powers, the imagination and the *vis cogitativa*. The essential act of the perception of beauty as beauty belongs to the intellect. Only the intellect can see the significant form. Only the intellect can detect the implications of the beautiful. The imagination cannot grasp meaning of any kind. It has no ideas. It has no direct power even over words and can use them only through the intermediation of the intellect which charges them with meaning. Yet in that perception of the beautiful in material things which plays so large a part in the making and enjoyment of poetry the intellect alone is insufficient. The highest point of the activity falls within its sphere, the whole does not. The apprehension of beauty does not *belong to it* in the same way that the abstraction of universals does. And, since the abstraction of universals and the perception of beauty are two cognitive processes of different kind, the interactivity between the imagination and the intellect in each case will be different too.

This interrelationship between the imagination and the intellect in the perception of the beautiful in material things is the first and perhaps the most fundamental problem suggested by a study of this kind. It offers itself as a possibility for investigation and speculation.

A second and closely related problem made to break covert, as it were, from this same field, is that of the rôle of the *vis cogitativa* as an intermediary between the imagination and the intellect in the apprehension of beauty. Perhaps this little mentioned faculty plays the greatest part of all the sensory powers in the perception of sensible beauty.

Another interesting question is that of the dominion of the intellect over the imagination. It is relative, not absolute. It uses the products of the imagination and, with the will, influences the amount and direction of its production. It can exercise no direct, immediate causality over imaginative activity at its very source. The imagination's own nature and operations set up limits past which the intellect cannot act. "Poetry is

not like reasoning, a power exerted according to the determination of the will. A man cannot say 'I will compose poetry.' The greatest poet even cannot say it ..."[57] The imagination has its own integrity. The powers which use it cannot, because they are above it in the hierarchy of the faculties, invade its own proper sphere. At the same time, poetry can be written under the direction of the intellect and the will, provided that the necessary conditions are present, that is, not only the technique and habit of poetic expression but a certain mood here and now obtaining which is a compound of imaginative activity and emotional reaction. Further, the intellect must, in working with images, respect their laws. Otherwise an imagery results which delights us by its incongruity instead of by its beauty. Where we were meant to sigh, we laugh.

A fourth problem upon which writers have touched but lightly and in passing may be formulated in the question: Why does meaning acquire an added significance by being clothed in poetic form? In this guise an intellectual truth has a heightened and altogether different appeal for man. The *Dies Irae* sequence carries more conviction to the majority of men than a whole theological treatise on the four last things.

There may be other problems which should have been pointed out here and are not. No claim is made to have mentioned them all or to have made a complete statement of any one of them. The only title an article of this type has for a philosophical hearing is that it points out, in however an insignificant way, the challenging fact that philosophers still have in this field, as in every other, a real opportunity to find, shrouded in the mists of half-knowledge, realities which are waiting to be recognized and accounted for in ultimate terms. To do this is the philosopher's own vocation—for the pursuit of which, material will never be lacking.

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[57] Percy B. Shelley, *Defence of Poetry*, p. 108.

# THE ULTIMATE END OF VENIAL SIN *

THEOLOGIANS HAVE often been at a loss to explain precisely how venial sin is possible in one who is in the state of grace. Such a one has evidently ordered his whole life towards God as to his ultimate end, and thus loves God above all creatures; and yet he commits a sin, often with full deliberation, which seemingly cannot be ordained to God; it would seem a blasphemy to state that God is the ultimate end of venial sin, even in one who is in the state of grace. Thus we are forced to conclude that the ultimate end of venial sin is a creature; and, if so, venial sin is in no way distinguished from mortal sin, for mortal sin is precisely the choice of some creature as ultimate end, in preference to God. This objection, therefore, leads us to deny the possibility of venial sin in one who is in the state of grace; whereas our faith, by means of Sacred Scripture [1] and the Council of Trent,[2] teaches us that venial sin is possible, and in fact inevitable, in those who are in the state of grace.

It is left to reason to answer this objection, and to indicate the true nature of venial sin; and many are the answers and theories which have been put forth. The answer commonly given is that the ultimate end of venial sin is neither God nor a creature; it is nothing more than one's own happiness or full contentment, sought after in general, abstracting from both God and the creature (*beatitudo in communi*). Thus a man in the state of grace commits a venial sin because he thinks it will add to his happiness here and now. This is quite true; but it does not assign the ultimate reason, nor fully answer the objection. For we can develop the objection thus: the happi-

* In this article our consideration is limited to a study of the ultimate end of venial sin in a man in the state of grace; we do not touch the question of its ultimate end in general, nor in the man who is in the state of mortal sin, for the specific problem we are considering does not then arise.

[1] *Prov.*, xxiv, 16; *Eccles.*, vii, 21; *James*, iii, 2.

[2] Sess. VI, Canon 23 (Denziger, 833).

ness sought after in venial sin is either happiness in the abstract, or in the concrete; in the first case, the answer is insufficient, because the will is not content with an abstraction, but seeks its objects among actual and really existing things. I am not satisfied with the idea of a swim in the abstract on a hot summer's day; what I desire is a real swim in the cool waters where I find actual refreshment and satisfaction. In the second case, if happiness is taken in the concrete, then the ultimate end of the venial sin is something concrete and created, my actual contentment and satisfaction as completed by the act of venial sin; and so the objection returns in full force.

The solution to this difficulty may be found, we believe, in St. Thomas's profound treatise on the nature of venial sin, especially in the *Summa Theologica*, I-II, qq. 88 and 89; and in the *Q. D. de Malo*, q. 7. The consideration of the nature of venial sin is intimately connected with that of its possibility, of which St. Thomas also treats in the above mentioned places; in fact, it is by considering the possibility of venial sins that we arrive at the principles which enable us to solve our difficulty; and hence we must first of all see why venial sin is possible in man at all. According to the common teaching of theologians, venial sin is not possible in an angel; nor was it possible in man in the state of innocence, that is, before the fall. Hence the reason why venial sin is now possible in man will become clear from a comparison between man and the angels; and between man before the fall and after it.

The reason why an angel is incapable of committing a venial sin, says St. Thomas,[3] is that the angel has not a discursive intellect, like ours. His intellect is intuitive, does not need to reason to conclusions from first principles, or vice versa, but immediately, at one glance, sees the conclusions as contained actually in the principles.[4] But in the practical order, the end has the same relation to the means, as the principles to the conclusions in the speculative order; the end is really the principle

[3] *Summa Theol.*, I-II, q. 89, a. 4; *Q. D. de Malo*, 7, a. 9.
[4] *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 58, a. 3.

in the practical order, since it is the first object of the will, and the reason for willing the means. Hence an angel, by one and the same act, just as it sees the conclusions in the principles, so it wills the means only insofar as they are actually apprehended as leading to the end desired. At one and the same time, by one and the same act, the angel wills the means and the end; and cannot will the means except under the aspect of actually leading to the end. Hence, there can be no inordination with regard to the means unless there is simultaneously an inordination with regard to the end; which is always a mortal sin. Man, on the other hand, must laboriously reason from principles to conclusions; he considers first the principles; then tries to penetrate their significance and so arrive at conclusions. He does not see all at once, but must first consider this truth, then that, and so arrive at a synthesis. Similarly, he does not see immediately the connection between means and end; he must deliberate and ponder on all the circumstances of his acts, to see if they really advance him towards the end he has in view. This is the reason why he so needs the virtue of prudence, which helps him to choose such means as lead him to the desired end; and thus St. Thomas always likens prudence to reason, or knowledge, while he likens *synderesis* to the habit of understanding. Hence man can desire his ultimate end without deliberating or choosing definite means to attain it; and he can also deliberate about the means without thinking actually about the end to which they are ordained. Thus, when man has definitely made up his mind with regard to the end to which he is going to direct his activity, when he has actually willed the end as the aim of all his activity, he begins to take counsel with himself as to how he may best, in practice, attain his end. Without now actually desiring this end, he is moved by this desire to choose the means to the end. In this case he is said to have a virtual desire, or intention, of the end, as distinct from the actual intention which preceded it. This choosing of the means is a long and tedious process, and man very easily gets lost among the multiplicity of details which he has to take into account. The thousand and one worries and cares of daily

life, the temptations besetting him from within and without, and ever so many other factors, conspire to distract his attention from the consideration of his ultimate end or purpose. He has never retracted his decision about the ultimate aim of all his activity; nor is he now moved by it to take steps to reach this ultimate end; he acts with the desire of his ultimate end, not because of it. In this case he is said to retain an habitual intention or desire of the end.

Since the possibility of venial sin in man lies, at least partially, in the nature of his intellectual activity, as is seen from this comparison with the angel, and since sin pertains essentially to the will, and not to the intellect, it follows that the possibility of venial sin results from the different ways of desiring the ultimate end. Man does not actually desire his last end in all his acts; and so he can err in his choice of means to the end, without thereby erring with regard to the end itself. In this he differs from the angel, who cannot err as to the means without simultaneously erring with regard to the end, for he chooses the means only insofar as they lead to the end ("*prout stant sub ordine finis*," as St. Thomas says).[5] By different acts, man chooses the means and orders them to the end; it is impossible for him to desire his last end actually in all his acts; he generally governs his actions by more immediate aims, the sum of which may be generically named prosperity, contentment, or happiness. This immediate happiness is the guiding light of his activity, the immediate end towards which he tends; not a mere abstraction, but actual and concrete contentment and satisfaction. It is in trying to gain possession of this happiness, or in the inordinate desire of it, that sin enters into man's life. This immediate end is itself only a means to the attainment of the absolutely last end of life, so that man may be disordered in his desire of it without thereby being necessarily disordered with regard to the last end. The man in the state of grace retains, evidently, his resolution to admit of no other last end but God. It thus follows that venial sin is an act in which man

[5] *Summa Theol.*, I-II, q. 89, a. 4.

indulges too much in his desire of immediate happiness, without losing his desire of God as his last end; in other words, it is an inordination with regard to the means which does not imply an inordination with regard to the end. Though man exceeds in his desire of the means, yet it remains only the desire of means, not of a new end; and hence they are somehow ordained to the end. In man, the means can be ordained to the end in three ways, as we have seen. Can venial sin, and man's happiness, inordinately desired in venial sin, be ordained to God in any of these three ways? This is the form our problem now takes, from the consideration of the difference between man and the angel; and the very comparison suggests that venial sin can be ordained to God in one of these ways.

St. Thomas and the majority of theologians also teach that venial sin is impossible in man in the state of innocence, that is, in man considered as endowed with the integrity of nature and the gift of original justice, which he lost by the sin of Adam.[6] In man endowed with these gifts, there reigned a supreme harmony, due primarily to the subjection of his higher faculties to God by grace. While his higher faculties were thus subject to God, his lower faculties were subject in perfect obedience to the higher ones.[7] On account of this harmonious order between man's faculties, by which his lower and sensual inclinations were subject to the control of reason, and his body to that of the soul, it was not possible for man to experience disordered motions in his sensual appetite unless this harmony was disturbed; which could only happen if the subjection of reason to God were broken; and this would mean open rebellion against God, the rejection of God as last end, or, in other words, mortal sin. As long as this harmony lasted, venial sin was impossible; it could only become possible by the disruption of this harmony, by mortal sin, by the loss of original justice. Hence, the second cause of venial sin in man is the insubordination and lack of subjection of man's lower inclinations to his rational faculties.

[6] Cf. *ibid.* a. 3; *Q. D. de Malo*, 7, a. 3, ad 13um; a. 7.
[7] Cf. *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 95, a. 1.

We have now indicated the two-fold reason of the possibility of venial sin in man. The first reason shows how venial sin is, as it were, theoretically possible, and will therefore be of primary importance to us in solving the problem before us. The second shows how venial sin is practically possible, and will enable us to distinguish the various kinds of venial sin, so that our solution may be complete. St. Thomas unites these two causes of venial sin in the following passage, where he likens the sway of reason in man to the rule of the government in the state: "A regime may be weakened, before being totally overthrown, on account of the ruler's lack of wisdom and justice; or on account of the lack of obedience in his subjects."[8]

Bearing in mind this two-fold reason, we can now distinguish the various kinds of venial sin. First of all, there is the venial sin which is venial only on account of the lack of deliberation, and would be mortal if full deliberation were present. Such sins are due to our imperfect control over our faculties; they are sudden emotions, whether of our rational or of our sensual powers, arising without our exciting them, antecedent to perfect deliberation.[9] With regard to such sins, the question of their ultimate end can hardly be raised at all. They are only human acts in an imperfect way, not fully deliberate or reasoned, nor, therefore, necessarily directed to some last end. Such acts, or rather, sudden movements, of our fallen nature, remain in the infra-rational order to which they essentially belong, and are culpable only insofar as they come under the dominion of reason, which has the power, and the obligation, of repressing them. Since they precede deliberation and consent, by which alone they can be ordained to some ultimate end, we cannot speak of the ultimate end of such sins; and hence this class of sins is eliminated from our investigation.

Venial sins which include full deliberation may pertain either to the rational or to sensual appetite. We can only speak of sins in the sensual appetite insofar as man's lower nature comes

[8] *Q. D. de Malo*, 7, a. 7 ad 9um; cf., a. 9 ad 2 um.

[9] Cf. *Summa Theol.*, I-II, q. 89, a. 3, c; *Q. D. de Malo*, 7, a. 5, ad 11um.

under the sway of reason; those physical movements which arise from natural causes are outside the moral order, since reason has no control over them, and so they are not sins at all. Only insofar as reason permits, excites or consents to these motions are they sinful.[10] Hence there can only be sins in the sensual appetite insofar as reason fails in its duty in restraining or repressing these sensual impulses; and thus the possibility of these sins is reduced to the possibility of venial sins in man's higher faculties, and we need only consider the part reason plays in such sins, since it is reason alone which ordains one's acts to some definite end in view. The will, indeed, is the first cause of all sins, in the order of efficient causality; but we are here dealing with the aspect of final causality; and since reason directs our acts to a definite end, it is the function of reason in these sins which concerns us, so that we do not here enter into the question of the activity of the will in such acts.

St. Thomas, in treating of this problem, clears the way to his solution by making a double distinction. He distinguishes higher reason (*ratio superior*), and lower reason (*ratio inferior*); and considers both under two aspects, with regard to their proper acts, and as directive of man's lower faculties. The distinction of reason into higher and lower is a distinction of functions, not of faculties. Reason is the intellect considered as the power of knowing truth by the process of deduction from principles.[11] It is the intellect considered as assenting to conclusions, as distinct from the intellect in its intuitive acts with regard to first principles. In the same way, higher and lower reason are one and the same faculty, considered under different aspects, with regard to different acts and habits.[12] Reason is called by the name of higher reason insofar as it has for its object those things which are higher than it in the scale of being, and which may generally be called eternal realities. Such are the things which pertain to God—the divine essence, eternal law, divine precepts, etc. Lower reason is reason considered in

[10] *Q. D. de Malo*, 7, a. 6, c; cf. ad 8um; *Summa Theol.*, I-II, q. 73, a. 3.
[11] *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 79, a. 8. [12] Cf. *ibid.*, a. 9; *Q. D. de Ver.*, 15, a. 2.

its relation to things lower than itself in the scale of being, created and passing or contingent things of the material order.

Higher reason again may consider eternal realities merely as objects of contemplation, or it may regard them as the exemplar of human activity, insofar as, in its contemplation of these, it enters into possession of those rules of conduct which are the guide of our moral life. Thus, higher reason can be considered in relation to its own proper objects and acts, or as directive of human activity. St. Augustine summed up these two functions in his famous definition: " The higher reason is intent on contemplating and consulting the eternal law." [12a] So also may lower reason be considered in this double function: as knowing those objects inferior to it, or as judging of human activity in relation to such objects.[13] These distinctions will now allow us to classify the various kinds of venial sin in man.

The proper object of reason is that which is true; and reason can sin with regard to this proper object by doubt, ignorance or error.[14] Doubt in higher reason, that is, in regard to divine things, can only be a venial sin insofar as the doubt is not fully deliberate; [15] and so this kind of sin can be eliminated from our investigation as being only imperfectly human, and as such, not necessarily ordained to any ultimate end. Deliberate ignorance and error with regard to the divine essence or divine precepts is usually mortally sinful; certainly if those truths which are necessary to salvation are in question. With regard to less important and secondary truths, venial sin may, perhaps, be admitted; but, if so, the truths about which one errs or which one neglects to learn, will be such that ignorance or doubt of them will not imperil one's eternal salvation.

Venial sin pertains to higher reason considered as directive of human activity, insofar as the consent to inordinate acts of our lower nature pertains ultimately to reason.[16] Reason in this

[12a] " ratio superior est quae intendit aeternis conspiciendis aut consulendis."
[13] Cf. *ibid.*, I-II, q. 74, a. 5 and a. 9.
[14] Cf. *ibid.*, a. 5; *Q. D. de Ver.*, 15, a. 3.
[15] Cf. *ibid.*, a. 10; *Q. D. de Malo*, 7, a. 5; *Q. D. de Ver.*, 15, a. 5.
[16] Cf. *ibid.*, a. 7.

case judges of human activity by reference to divine precepts, and so necessarily involves deliberation; it sees that such an act is forbidden by God, and nevertheless consents to it. If the act itself is venially sinful, the consent to it will also be venially sinful.[17] These are the sins of higher reason which primarily concern us; and so the question we have to answer in regard to these sins is: " How is it possible that an act, which reason recognises as being evil and prohibited by God, though not under pain of damnation, can be accepted without destroying man's election of God as his last end? "

Venial sins in lower reason, with regard to its proper acts, consists in voluntary ignorance or error of those natural truths which one is bound to know, whether absolutely, or according to one's state in life; such sins generally arise from such indolence, neglect or vanity as is only venially sinful. Man prefers to maintain his own opinion, even when the contrary is shown to be true; or he will not take the trouble to acquire that knowledge which his state demands; but he is ready to do that which is commanded of him under pain of mortal sin. These sins evidently spring from an excessive self-love, an undue attachment to one's own opinion or leisure. Hence they can be reduced to that category of sins in which man seeks his own pleasure or contentment in an inordinate way, without thereby turning away from God by mortal sin.

Lower reason sins venially in its duties as director or moderator of our lower inclinations by commanding or failing to repress and moderate such motions, after due deliberation. But the deliberation of lower reason has to do entirely with temporal motives; the sinful act is considered merely in its relation to temporal things. " If man," says St. Thomas, " after due deliberation, consents to an inordinate act; and if this deliberation considers only temporal things, for instance, regards an act merely as useful or harmful, decent or unbecoming according to the common opinion of mankind; then the sin is said to be in lower reason." [18] Such an act is not, therefore, considered

[17] Cf. *ibid.*, a. 9.

[18] *Q. D. de Malo*, 7, a. 5. Cf. *Q. D. de Ver.*, 15, a. 3.

directly as an offense against God, though it is in some way known to be evil and prohibited; it is considered entirely in the light of temporal motives, as useful, shameful, pleasant, etc.; and reason sins in exciting or failing to moderate such acts.[19] Man commits these sins, as is evident, in order to satisfy his craving after happiness; the useful and the pleasant are chosen precisely as helping towards the attainment of more complete satisfaction; and hence the two classes of venial sins of lower reason may be grouped together; and the question we have to answer with regard to them is: " How can man seek after his temporal happiness by means of inordinate acts, judged merely in the light of temporal motives, without thereby refusing to accept God as the ultimate end of all his activity? "

We shall consider this latter question first, as it is easier to answer than the first question proposed above, and will help us in our solution of it.

We must now return to the consideration of the principle at which we arrived by our comparison between man and the angels; namely, that man need not, in fact, cannot, direct all his activity towards God, his last end, by an actual intention, present in every act. The most he can do, is to order some acts actually to God, and the others virtually. So many things have to be taken into account, so many things to be done in the course of our lives, that man has often to deliberate for a long time before deciding on a definite course of action. We become immersed in the needs and desires of the day, and find all our attention absorbed by them, so that we rule our activity by immediate considerations, we suit our actions to their immediate circumstances, without thinking actually of that end to which all our life must be directed. We retain our election of God as our last end; but we do not act in virtue of this choice; we are moved by the momentary moods and impulses that arise in us a hundred times a day, just as the young plant is swayed to and fro by the changing winds, but remains ever pointing up to heaven. We are then said to retain an habitual desire of

[19] Cf. *Summa Theol.*, I-II, q. 74, a. 6.

God as our last end; our activity is, so to speak, orientated towards God, though some of the particular acts which go to make up this sum of activity are not ordained to God, either actually or virtually. But it is evident that this activity is only remotely and distantly ordained to God; its immediate end is something actually or virtually desired in all our acts; and this is nothing else than our complete happiness, our full contentment. This is the driving force behind all our actions, whether we conceive of it as attainable only by union with God or by the gratification of our inordinate desires. Man does not, cannot, consent to even the most insignificant act, if it is fully deliberate, unless he conceives of it as contributing to his perfection and happiness. This happiness, the man in the state of grace well knows, can only be attained in its fullness by that loyalty to God which will be rewarded in a future life. But this perfect beatitude belongs to the future life; only a very imperfect happiness is attainable here below; and yet man seeks after his happiness while on this earth. This terrestrial happiness is integrated by many partial joys, some pertaining to the body, some to the soul; and those of the body are more attractive and more keenly felt in fallen man, than those of the soul. Hence it is that man is often led to seek his terrestrial happiness more than is lawful in temporal goods, or by an inordinate use of spiritual goods; he does not always preserve that equilibrium and harmony between the pleasant and the good which nature and grace enjoin. But while thus indulging more in terrestrial joys than he should, he is moved entirely by temporal considerations, by considering such acts as useful, as making him happier for the moment, as being applauded by his companions, and so forth. He is quite conscious that such acts are sinful, though only venially so; but he does not consider them expressly in their relation to God; he considers them in relation to his own satisfaction or happiness. This is the end to which he ordains such acts; not any one definite being or reality, but a rather confused and indeterminate complexity, which is conceived as capable of making him happier. If we would speak of this end as an object, then we would call it man's supreme good,

that which affords him the happiness he seeks, but which is not determined as being any one definite reality. Since man need not, in choosing means, direct them expressly to some definite end, as we have seen, at least not to some definite ultimate end; he may prefer to abstain from ordaining his inordinate acts to any definite ultimate end, merely preferring to will them insofar as they lead to an increase in his actual contentment. He thus ordains them to his supreme good, that indefinite perfection which he seeks in all his acts, and which is, subjectively, his complete happiness.

The desire for this happiness is not, however, absolute; that is to say, the man in the state of grace does not desire his temporal well-being above all other things. He retains an habitual choice of God as his last end, and is determined not to seek his happiness in things which would necessitate the revoking of this choice. He is resolved never to commit a mortal sin, and is ready to sacrifice even his temporal happiness rather than do so. Hence he has habitually subordinated his temporal happiness to God; the divine principle of grace within him is ever watchful and active, inasmuch as it restrains him from seeking any created good as his absolutely last end; and so, though it does not directly influence man's action in sinning venially, it exercises an indirect supervision or domination over all his activity. Hence this habitual election of God does not mean only mere concomitance of charity and venial sin; it means that man's activity is ruled indirectly by charity, even when he commits venial sin. It means that man has habitually subordinated his temporal happiness to God as to his last end; and since man in all his actions seeks this happiness, either actually or virtually, it follows that venial sin is either actually or virtually ordained to this happiness, which is habitually ordained to God, by the virtue of charity. Hence we are led to the conclusion that venial sin is habitually ordained to God, on account of the influence of charity on man's activity; the last end of venial sin is, therefore, nothing else than God Himself, but only insofar as He is habitually intended in all the acts of one in the state of grace.

Many authors, I know, will cavil at this solution; and indeed, it requires much further explanation. But it will be sufficient to say at present that those who do not agree with this solution must also disagree with St. Thomas himself, who has put forward this solution, in almost the same words. He says, for instance, "That which we love in venial sin, is loved for God's sake habitually, though not actually." [23] The word "for" (*propter*) expresses real causality,[24] and not mere concomitance, though in this case, the causality is of the habitual order. We would naturally expect St. Thomas to propose this solution in his treatise on venial sin, and, in fact, he does repeat it there, not once, but several times. In the *De Malo* he says: "He that sins venially, does not enjoy created good, but uses it, for he refers it habitually to God, although not actually." [25] This is a very explicit statement that the object of venial sin is referred to God, Who is hence its last end, though only habitually. In the *Summa Theologica* he expressly says the same of the act itself of venial sin: "Now venial sin excludes only actual reference of the human act to God's glory, and not habitual reference; because it does not exclude charity, which refers man to God habitually." [26] And the reason he assigns is that charity exercises this habitual domination over all man's activity. It is very difficult to understand how Cajetan, Sylvius and Billuart interpret such texts as teaching the mere concomitance of venial sin and charity: Cajetan does not, in fact, say anything about this text in his commentary, it is far too clear to admit his interpretation, though he proposes his opinion of mere concomitance elsewhere.[27] Gonet and the Salmanticenses, having quoted these texts, say that there can be no doubt at all that,

[23] "Quod enim amatur in peccato veniali, propter Deum amatur habitu, etsi non actu." *Summa Theol.*, II-II, q. 24, a. 10 ad 2um.

[24] Cf. *ibid.*, q. 27, a. 3.

[25] "Ille qui peccat venialiter, non fruitur creatura, sed utitur ea; refert enim eam habitu in Deum, etsi non actu." *Q. D. de Malo*, 7, a. 1 ad 4um; cf. a. 2 ad 1um.

[26] "Veniale autem peccatum non excludit habitualem ordinationem actus humani in gloriam Dei, sed solum actualem: quia non excludit caritatem, quae habitualiter ordinat in Deum." *Summa Theol.*, I-II, q. 88, a. 1 ad 2um.

[27] Cf. *Comm.* in II-II, q. 24, a. 10, n. 4.

according to St. Thomas, venial sin is habitually ordained to God; and they expressly reject the opinion of Cajetan, Sylvius and Billuart.[25] The Salmanticenses also aptly point out that such an opinion does not solve the problem before us; for if "habitually referring to God (*habitu referre in Deum*)" means mere concomitance of venial sin and charity, while the venial sin is in no way ordained to God; then it follows that the act must be ordained to some creature as to its last end, and so the whole difficulty about these acts remains.[26]

It seems that the authors who hold for this mere concomitance between venial sin and charity belittle the rôle of charity in man's activity. This virtue ordains all the acts of all the virtues to its own proper end, to God;[27] it dominates and informs all man's activity, coordinating and elevating it into one constant stream of active tendency towards God. Venial sin is evidently not directly imperated by charity; it is a defective tendency towards some created good, real or apparent, which however, coexists with the universal impulse of charity towards God, and is somehow caught up into, and carried on by, this powerful stream of activity, to the end whither it is directed by charity. This defective motion is not coordinated into the universal tendency deriving from charity so as to form an integral part of it, in the way that good acts form a homogeneous element of such a tendency; it does not enter *per se* into the region of vital impulses directed by charity towards God. Hence some authors assert that it merely coexists with this divine driving power behind all our actions. But, as we have seen, venial sin has not a special last end, distinct from that to which charity directs all man's acts; its last end is God, on account of the habitual influence of charity, as St. Thomas says. It is hence somehow drawn by charity to God, attracted by the vital magnetism of charity to this virtue's last end. Since this

[25] Gonet, *Clypeus Theologiae Thomisticae*, Vol. IV, "De Vitiis et Peccatis," Disp. IX, a. 3, n. LXX; Salmanticenses, *Cursus Theologicus*, Vol. VIII, "De Ultimo Fine," Disp. IV, Dub. IV, aa. 1 and 2.

[26] *Loc. cit.*, n. 81.

[27] Cf. *Summa Theol.*, II-II, q. 23, a. 8.

concurrence of two distinct and, to some extent, opposing, impulses, is not *per se*, it must be, in scholastic terminology, *per accidens*. Venial sin is not ordained to God by reason of its very nature as a sinful act, but only on account of the influence which charity exercises in the person who commits venial sin; it is ordained to God, not because it is a venial sin, but because it is the act of a person dominated in all his activity by charity. Venial sin, this defective impulse towards some created good as a means, does not hence corrupt the universal impulse of charity towards God. It impedes it somewhat, it retards the progress of man to his real last end; and because it is defective, it is only *per accidens* with regard to charity: but the fact that it is a defect in the tendency of man towards God shows that this tendency remains. Hence the union of venial sin and charity is not *per se*, but *per accidens*: that there is a union at all (in tending to a common last end), is due to the influence of charity, which hence does not remain idle, does not merely coexist with venial sin, but draws it to its own last end.

We may liken this universal impulse of charity towards God to the sweeping flow of a broad river, whose waters glide ever on to the limitless ocean from which they came. Where these waters meet the banks, there will be numerous eddies and counter-currents; but this contact with the earth will only slow-up the flow of the river and impede its progress for a time: the varying counter-currents and swirling eddies of disturbed water, though not caused by the river, are caught up into the broad strong flow of the hurrying stream, and are swept on with it and in it, to be embraced in the bosom of the mighty sea. We have to explain the mysterious and powerful influence of charity on all our acts in dry and technical formulae: these should not be permitted to blind us to the real significance of the deep working of charity in our souls. In using the expression "*per accidens*" we mean to convey that the strong current of charity-inspired energy and tendency towards God, though it does not cause venial sin, and is not diverted by it, draws it on with it in its resistless flow to God, by ordaining it to its own last end.

This habitual ordination of venial sins to God is explained

by the Salmanticenses,[28] as being the indirect domination of charity over such acts, which results in a certain modification (*informatio*) of venial sin by charity, in the way we have explained above; venial sin, and one's happiness as desired in that sin, is not directly ordained to God; but the virtue of charity would forbid them if they were gravely sinful, and prepares a man to forego such an act if it were gravely sinful. Hence the sin is still indirectly subordinated to charity, and so to God. We may admit this solution, as explaining how the temporal happiness of the venial sinner is habitually ordained to God. The influence, even though it be only indirect, of charity, is far more easily conceived as having for its object man's temporal happiness, which of itself does not include any inordination, than the inordered act of venial sin itself. Charity thus influences venial sin by determining that man's happiness be subordinated habitually to God, and so exercises a mediate, as distinct from an indirect, influence, on venial sin. So we prefer to say that man, in venial sin, ordains his act either actually or virtually to his temporal happiness, to his own perfection; and this is, in turn, habitually subordinated to God, through the influence of charity. This seems more in accord with St. Thomas, who says, conceding an objection in the *De Malo*:

> In order that an act be meritorious in one in the state of grace, it is not necessary that it be actually referred to God; it suffices for it to be actually referred to some convenient end, which is habitually referred to God. . . . But he who is in the state of grace has ordained himself, and all he possesses, to God, to Whom he adheres as to his last end. Hence, whatever he ordains to himself, or to something pertaining to himself, is done meritoriously, even though he does not actually think of God, unless it be an inordinate act, which cannot be referred to God.[29]

In saying that such an act cannot be ordained to God, he evidently means that it cannot be actually referred to Him. One more text will suffice to prove this: "He that sins venially, cleaves to temporal good, not as enjoying it, because he does

[28] *Loc. cit.*, n. 82.

[29] *Q. D. de Malo*, 2, a. 5, obj. 11.

not fix his end in it, but as using it, by referring it to God, not actually but habitually." [30]

In this text, just quoted, St. Thomas identifies the habitual ordination of venial sin to God with the use of temporal goods, as distinguished from their fruition, that is, from the enjoyment of them as the ultimate end of all our activity. He constantly repeats the distinction between use and fruition, inordination with regard to the means and with regard to the end, " against the law (*contra legem*) " and " beside the law (*praeter legem*)," when he treats of the distinction between mortal and venial sin. A brief examination of these notions will reveal that they are other ways of saying that venial sin is habitually ordained to God, and will enable us to apply our theory to those sins of higher reason which we must now consider.

Such sins, as has already been pointed out, consist in the deliberate choice of some temporal pleasure, which is actually apprehended as being prohibited by God, though not under pain of damnation. There is full deliberation present in such an act, and yet it is not a mortal sin.[31] We may note, in passing, a remark of St. Thomas which shows how prone even the best of us are to commit such acts, and which admirably inculcates the christian virtue of humility:

> Man's affections are habitually inclined to commit some venial sins, in such a way, namely, that if they are remembered, they do not displease us; and, perhaps, if we had the chance of committing them, we would do so; and it rarely happens that men in this mortal life are free from such affections; hence we cannot say with confidence that we are not guilty of sin.[32]

These sins are evidently more grievous than those of lower reason, for, besides being swayed by temporal motives, the sinner actually considers the act as being forbidden by God. The more intellectual a man is, it may also be noted, the greater is the danger of falling into mortal sin. Such a man sees very

[30] " Ille qui peccat venialiter, inhaeret bono temporali, non ut fruens, quia non constituit in eo finem, sed ut utens, referens in Deum, non actu, sed habitu." *Summa Theol.*, I-II, q. 88, a. 1, ad 3um.

[31] Cf. *Q. D. de Malo*, 7, a. 5, ad 8um. [32] *Ibid.*, a. 12, ad 4um.

clearly the connection, or rather the repugnance, between the sin and the law of God; and so, fuller deliberation, and also malice, are present in his sin. To be highly intellectual is to approach more nearly to the condition of the angels, and hence to be less capable of deliberate venial sin; this consideration should inspire humility in those who are gifted with acute intelligences, or who are well-instructed in the nature of sin, and the precepts of divine law. To return to our subject, we have seen that an habitual ordination to God as to one's last end is present in venial sins of lower reason; can the same be said of venial sins of higher reason? How can such an ordination be compatible with the actual intention of doing something forbidden by God and known clearly as such?

The first distinction which St. Thomas makes in solving this problem is that between "to enjoy (*frui*)" and "to use (*uti*)." The act of fruition is that act of the will, by which it delights in some object as in its last end; its proper object is that which is apprehended as the last end.[33] To this act of the will corresponds the act of the intellect by which we apprehend an object as giving complete satisfaction to all our desires. Use, however, is the application of a thing to its proper operation; we use a thing when we apply a principle of action to its action. It is hence, primarily, an act of the will, but pertains to the intellect insofar as it implies the ordering of one thing to another; and, as such, can only have reference to that which is a means, and is ordered to some end. A principle of action is always, of its very nature, ordained to its action. Thus a thing is said to be useful inasmuch as it is capable of obtaining the end for which it is made.[34] Fruition and use, therefore, are acts, whose objects are, respectively, the end, and the means to the end; hence this distinction is the same as that between the end and the means to the end, since the act is specified by the object; and so we are led to the second distinction which St. Thomas makes in this connection.

Venial sin, says St. Thomas, is distinguished from mortal sin,

[33] Cf. *Summa Theol.*, I-II, q. 11. [34] Cf. *ibid.*, q. 16.

insofar as it is an inordination with regard to the means to the end, while mortal sin is an inordination with regard to the ultimate end itself, the deliberate rejection of God as last end.[35] He is speaking here in all formality, of that which is essential in venial sin; the material object of venial sin may be God, and the material object of mortal sin may be a created good. Sins whose object is God, are, of themselves, mortal, and are only venial because of the want of full deliberation. The object of mortal sin as such is something preferred to God, something chosen as giving us the supreme satisfaction which we seek, that is, something chosen formally as our last end. Venial sin has for its formal object something considered merely as leading to an end, as a means; and as a means which is not so related to the end, that its choice (or rejection) will mean the rejection of the end.

This brings us near to our solution. We have seen that venial sin is possible in man because he is a rational, as distinct from an intellectual being; he has to reason from principles to conclusions, and arrive at truth by slow investigation. In this process, he may easily err as to certain conclusions, without thereby erring with regard to the principles, if such conclusions have not a necessary connection with the principles. The will follows the intellect, and proceeds from the volition of the end to the choice of the means to this end; and if such means have not a necessary connection with the end, then one can will them, or refuse them, without thereby rejecting the end.[36] Similarly, only the knowledge of first principles, and of the conclusions necessarily connected with them, pertains to the essential perfection of the intellect (*perfectio simpliciter*); the knowledge of contingent conclusions is only a partial perfection (*perfectio secundum quid*). So, in the appetitive order, the perfection of the will, or moral perfection, consists essentially in the adherence to the last end and to those things without which this end cannot be attained; the choice of those things which have

[35] Cf. *ibid.*, q. 88, a. 1, c; a. 2, c; a. 4, c; q. 89, a. 1, ad 1um; a. 3, c. *Q. D. de Malo*, 7, a. 1, ad 19um; a. 2, ad 12um; a. 3, c; a. 7, c, etc.

[36] Cf. *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 82, a. 2.

only a contingent relation to the end does not constitute more than the partial perfection of the will.[37] Hence, in order to desire the essential perfection of the will, or one's moral perfection in its essentials, all that is required is the adherence to the last end and the choice of those means which are necessary to its attainment. The absence of the partial, or accidental, perfection of the will does not destroy its essential perfection. Hence, the desire of moral perfection, or of sanctity, of union with God, in its essentials, can co-exist with the choice of some act which implies the absence of only accidental perfection. Those sins, therefore, whose objects we may call in all formality, contingent means to the end, do not destroy one's essential perfection, nor habitual desire of God, even if they are deliberately chosen; just as I do not destroy the habit of first principles in the speculative order, by maintaining a remote conclusion which I know to be false. I maintain such a conclusion because it fits in with a pet theory of mine, or because I am self-willed or obstinate, or for some other reason, ultimately reducible to self-love. This inordinate self-love also leads me to commit deliberately what I know to be a venial sin; [38] I do it because I want to be happier, to get rid of some depression, or from some other such motive. In other words, I ordain it to my temporal happiness; this temporal happiness is habitually ordained to God by charity, as we have seen, and the sin does not destroy this habitual surrendering of oneself to God; and so we arrive at the same solution as for the preceding question.

Both questions are thus reduced to the reconciliation of the inordinate desire of one's temporal happiness, and the habitual desire of God as the last end. He who is in the state of grace has subordinated his temporal happiness to God; this happiness is hence only a means to the end, and a contingent means, not necessarily connected with the desire of God, as is evident from the act of martyrdom, and from the fact that one is ready to sacrifice this happiness rather than offend God mortally.

[37] Cf. Cajetan, *Comm. in Summa Theol.*, I-II, q. 88, a. 1, n. 6.
[38] Cf. *Summa Theol.*, I-II, q. 87, a. 4.

Hence, the inordinate desire of this, a contingent means to the end, does not imply the destruction of the desire of the end, so long as it is loved only as a means; so we are justified in concluding that both kinds of venial sin, so far from excluding the habitual desire of God, really imply it. If the created objects of those sins are only means, then the last end can only be God; and so, God is the last end of venial sin, though He is only habitually desired in it.

Venial sin is hence neither actually nor virtually ordained to God; but neither is it ordained to any creature under the aspect of last end. It is an act, whose object is some created good, loved precisely as finite; [39] the acceptance of some object which does not exclude the end, but without which, the end would be more easily attained; [40] an impediment, retarding us in the attainment of our last end,[41] but leaving intact the principle inclining us towards that end,[42] because the inordinate love of the means does not diminish our love of the end.[43] If I am ordered by the doctor to take rum to cure me of my cold, an inordinate desire of the rum will in no way lessen my desire to be rid of the cold. It is hence an inordinate use of some object, considered precisely as only hindering us in our journey towards God, not turning us away from Him. This is also what St. Thomas means by saying that mortal sin is "against the law (*contra legem*)," while venial sin is only "beside the law (*praeter legem*)." [44] He does not mean that venial sin is not a transgression of some particular law; "*Contra legem*" is only a handy formula for expressing "contrary to the essence of the law," that is, moral law, or the law of subjection to God as to our last end. The substance of the law is that which is necessary in order to achieve the end of the law, which is union with God; and this is imposed under pain of mortal sin. But the moral law also imposes other acts, which, however, are not absolutely

[39] *Q. D. de Malo*, 7, a. 2, sed contra.
[40] *Ibid.*, a. 5, c.
[41] *Ibid.*, ad 2um, ad 5 um.
[42] *Ibid.*, a. 11, c.
[43] *Ibid.*, a. 2, c.
[44] Cf. *Summa Theol.*, I-II, q. 88, a. 1, ad 1um; II-II, q. 105, a. 1, ad 1um; *Q. D. de Malo*, 7, a. 1, ad 1um.

necessary to the attainment of the end of the law; they are, as it were, the accidentals of moral law, and may be absent without destroying its essence; and hence venial sin, which regards such acts, is said to be " beside the law (*praeter legem*)," or more accurately, " beside the law or the substance of the law (*praeter finem vel substantiam legis*)." [45] This may be summarised by saying that mortal sin is contrary to the end, in view of which the law is imposed; venial sin is contrary to the manner of tending to the end which is commanded by law.[46] This "*modus*" which is imposed on us, is that we do nothing except that which advances us towards the end in question, that we ordain all our acts to the attainment of that end. We certainly do not ordain our venial sins either actually or virtually to the attainment of our last end; hence they are acts deprived of that order which they should have. Thus St. Thomas: " Mortal sin includes the privation of the end; venial sin, however, the privation of order to that end "; [47] and " he who sins venially, lacks the order of love in some act, which has for its object the means to the end, but he does not lack this order in regard to the end itself," [48] for " his mind remains habitually ordered to that end." [49] We may therefore sum up the distinction of venial from mortal sin thus: " It is one thing not to be ordained to God; and this is the mark of venial sin; it is quite another thing to exclude the ordination to God, which is the mark of mortal sin." [50]

This distinction brings us at last to the fundamental solution of our problem; it provides us with a clear notion of the essence of venial sin and of its last end; and sheds no small light, I think, on some of the basic principles governing the philosophy of human acts.

We have arrived at the conclusion that venial sin is an act which is not ordained to God as to its last end, as distinct from an act which positively excludes such an ordination; it is an

[45] Cf. Salmanticenses, " De Vitiis et Peccatis," Disp. XIX, Dub. I, n. 10.
[46] Cf. *Summa Theol.*, I-II, q. 88, a. 1, ad 1um.
[47] *Q. D. de Malo*, 7, a. 3, sed contra 3.
[48] *Ibid.*, a. 1, ad 21um.
[49] *Ibid.*, a. 9, c.
[50] *Ibid.*, a. 1, ad 22um.

act deprived of that ordination which reason and revelation tell us it should have. What is the ordination to God thus required? It is not an actual ordination, a formal and explicit ordering to God as to its last end; it is impossible that all our acts in this life should be so ordered to God, and hence it is not commanded by the moral law.[51] Neither does an habitual ordination suffice, for this is found, as we have seen, in venial sins.[52] Much less, therefore, would an interpretative ordination be sufficient. Hence, the moral law requires that all acts which are fully human should be at least virtually (or, more accurately, in scholastic terminology, *actu implicite*) ordered to God as to their last end.[53] Thus "to refer all things to God virtually, falls under the precept of charity, since it is nothing else than to have God as one's last end." [54] This is already commanded by natural law, and is reiterated by divine law, in the words of St. Paul: "Do all to the glory of God." [55]

A venial sin is hence, generically, an act which is habitually ordered to God as to its last end, but which lacks that virtual ordination which reason and the divine law require; which, in fact, cannot be virtually ordained to God, since it is an evil act, being the inordinate use of some temporal good insofar as it is a means to the ultimate end. But here a serious difficulty confronts us; for theologians commonly teach that man in every really human act is moved by at least the virtual desire of his last end. If such a virtual ordination is of the essence of a human act, how can it be imposed by the moral law? It would be like passing a law commanding all men to be rational animals; and it would follow that every deliberate act of a man in the state of grace would be virtually ordained to God; and hence, either a man in the state of grace could not commit a

[51] Cf. *Summa Theol.*, I-II, q. 88, a. 1, ad 1um; II-II, q. 83, a. 13; *Q. D. de Car.*, a. 11, ad 2um, ad 3um.

[52] Cf. *II Sent.*, D. 38, q. 1, a. 1, ad 4um; D. 40, q. 1, a. 5, ad 6um; *Q. D. de Car.*, a. 11, ad 2um; *Q. D. de Malo*, 7, a. 1, ad 9um.

[53] Cf. *II Sent., loc. cit.*; *Q. D. de Car., loc. cit.*; *III Contra Gentiles*, 138, etc.

[54] *Q. D. de Car.*, a. 11, ad 3um.

[55] *I Cor.*, x, 31; cf. *II Sent.*, D. 40, q. 1, a. 5, ad 7um; *Summa Theol.*, I-II, q. 88, a. 1, ad 2um.

venial sin, or his venial sins would be virtually ordained to God; and this is either heresy or blasphemy. It is therefore necessary to determine the true signification of the principle in question, in order that we may overcome this difficulty and arrive at the fundamental solution of our problem.

Some theologians assert that man, in every deliberate human act, is motived by the at least virtual desire of his last end, not only of the last end in general (*in communi*), but also in particular; and they assume that this is the same as saying that he acts at least virtually on account of (*propter*) his last end, both formal and material. Thus, Gonet—if I may take the example of one who holds the general conclusions which have been so far put forth in this investigation—lays down that doctrine as quite certain; and then he proceeds to show that the last end in particular of a man in the state of grace is God; and that such a man, in sinning venially, ordains his acts only habitually to God.[56] But this is really a contradiction in terms; an act, which is, of its very nature, at least virtually ordained to God, cannot be merely habitually ordained to Him. Are we, then, to deny what so many theologians teach, namely that deliberate acts are ordained, at least virtually, to the last end in particular? The Salmanticenses do, in fact, interpret St. Thomas in this way,[57] teaching that a man does not in every act desire his last end in particular; all that is necessary in a human act is that it be at least virtually ordained to the last end in general (*in communi*).

I do not think that such a radical denial is necessary; the solution of this difficulty, and the true sense of the principle we are considering, may be found by making a fundamental distinction with regard to the last end; a distinction, however, which is practically never found in our treatises on human acts, which accounts for the confusion and divergence of opinion regarding this cardinal doctrine.

The final cause in general is in some way the term of an

[56] *Op. cit.*, Disp. IX, a. 4, nn. 76 seqq.
[57] *Op. cit.*, Tr. VIII, Disp. 5, aa. 1 and 2; nn. 2, 3, 7.

action—that towards which it tends.[58] It is, therefore, something desired, something which one intends to obtain by his action, something considered as good for the agent; and so the generic notion of end is that which is good.[59] The last end is therefore that which is good in itself, or is so apprehended,[60] which is good of its very nature, and is so desired for itself, while everything else is merely desired insofar as it leads to the possession of this supreme good.[61] The final cause, therefore, necessarily connotes the perfection, at least partial, of the being which reaches out to it, for it is something primarily considered as good; and the good is nothing else than being, considered in relation to the appetitive faculty, considered as desirable,[62] or as pertaining to the perfection of that which desires it. This notion of the good, however, does not suffice to explain final causality; it is the fundamental notion of final cause;[63] in scholastic terms, it constitutes a final cause *in actu primo*; but the good is only actually (*in actu secundo*) an end insofar as it is actually desired, insofar as it attracts an agent and moves him to action.[64] Hence St. Thomas defines the good as " being, insofar as it is perfective of something else in the manner of an end,"[65] or " being with the relation of final cause."[66] The last end in general is, therefore, the supreme good, actually desired in itself and for itself, insofar as it is capable of bestowing on the agent that supreme perfection and satisfaction which it is impelled by its very nature to desire. This is an entirely abstract notion, common to all last ends, whether of inanimate creation, of brute animals, of man or of angels; some thing which has no real existence in itself, the attributes of a real

[58] Cf. *II Phys.*, lect. 10, n. 15; lect. 11, n. 4; *III Cont. Gent.*, 16; *Summa Theol.*, I-II, q. 1, a. 3, c and ad 1um.

[59] Cf. *I Metph.*, lect. 4 (Ed. Cathala, n. 71); lect. 11 (n. 179); II lect. 4 (n. 317); V, lect. 17 (n. 1000); XII, lect. 7 (n. 2528); *I Cont. Gent.*, 40; III, 16 and 17; *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 5, a. 4.

[60] *V Metaph.*, lect. 3 (n. 781). [61] *Ibid.*, III, lect. 4 (n. 374).

[62] Cf. *Q. D. de Ver.*, 1, a. 1; *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 16, a. 3.

[63] Cf. Ferrariensis in *I Cont. Gent.*, 37, n. 4.

[64] Cf. *Q. D. de Ver.*, 22, a. 2: " influere causae finalis est appeti et desiderari."

[65] *Ibid.*, 21, aa. 1 and 2. [66] *Ibid.*, a. 1, ad 1um and ad 9um.

being considered by the mind apart from the being in which they are realised.

Leaving the realm of abstractions, we now come to consider one particular form of appetitive faculty, the rational appetite of man, and not of man in general, but of one particular man; and, since the will always seeks some concrete object, we consider the last end in particular, corresponding to the will of one man in particular. In this concrete object, apprehended as the last end in particular, we must distinguish two formalities: the concrete object itself, and the aspect under which it is desired by the will. This division corresponds to the division of the object of the will into formal and material object, not, however, of the object of the will in general, but of the will considered as the appetitive faculty of a particular individual, in relation to that concrete good which he apprehends as his last end. The formal object in this case is the formality of being the supreme good and final perfection of the individual, not in the abstract, but insofar as it is found in some concrete object, as actually denominating a particular good, whatever that may be; the material object is that object which is apprehended as fully satisfying all man's desires. We may call these two formalities the formal last end and the material last end; both pertain to the last end in particular, since they are but its formal and material aspects. We therefore distinguish between the last end in general and the last end in particular; and this latter is further subdivided into formal and material last end; and thus we do not identify the last end in general with the formal last end, as so many authors do.

It must be noted, however, that this is a distinction of the last end entirely in the objective sense. In our manuals, the formal last end is taken to mean the act by which the material last end is attained, and is hence entirely subjective. The distinction we have proposed refers altogether to the last end in itself, objectively considered as the term of the action of the appetitive faculty. We might plead for the adoption of a definite scholastic terminology to express this distinction ("the final formal subjective end [*finis ultimus formalis subjectivus*]"

and " the final formal objective end [*finis ultimus formalis objectivus*] ") ; but, though the question of terminology is very important, even essential to the proper understanding of the doctrine involved, it is not the scope of this article to propose such a terminology. It suffices for our purpose to have explained what we mean by the terms used in the article, and to have made it clear that we use the expression " formal ultimate end " in an entirely objective sense. Perhaps we should not say " entirely " objective sense, for the last end, since it is fundamentally the supreme good, necessarily involves a relation to the will, that is, a subjective aspect; and this may be the cause of the confusion of the two distinct notions. The last end, in its subjective aspect, is usually called " beatitude," though St. Thomas also uses this word in an objective sense; he says that beatitude is nothing more than the last end of a rational being,[67] but also uses it to signify the act by which one attains the last end.[68] The consideration of beatitude will also justify the division we have given above; for most authors, treating of beatitude, admit that beatitude in general, formal beatitude and material beatitude, are distinct formalities. If beatitude be taken objectively, as identical with the last end, then the last end will obviously be similarly divided; if it be taken subjectively, as the subjective aspect of the last end, then there must evidently be a corresponding three-fold division in the last end considered objectively, since we are treating of two aspects of the one reality. Formal beatitude is taken to mean the act by which one attains full and perfect happiness in its essentials; the objective reality corresponding to this action is something known and desired as one's supreme good; it is formally the supreme and perfect good of the person who desires it, but materially it may be either God or creature; and hence Cajetan defines the formal ultimate end as " the perfect good of anyone (*bonum perfectum cuiusque*) ." [69] Thus the common teaching of theologians on the nature of beatitude leads logically to the division of last end as proposed above.

[67] *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 26, a. 1. [68] Cf. *ibid.*, I-II, q. 1, a. 8; q. 2, a. 7.
[69] *Comm. in Summa Theol.*, I-II, q. 1, a. 6; n. 1.

Evident as this three-fold distinction of the last end seems to be, it is rarely mentioned by authors, or applied to the interpretation of St. Thomas in the *Summa Theol.*, I-II, q. 1, a. 6.[70] Yet it can easily be inferred from an attentive study of several points of St. Thomas's doctrine. For instance, when he treats of the nature of the will, he first considers the object of the will in general, which is "good and the end in general";[71] this is the object of the will considered "according to the common nature of its object (*secundum communitatem sui obiecti*)," [72] and is hence an entirely abstract consideration. But if we consider the will insofar as it is a certain determined faculty of the soul, with a determined act,[73] that is, in particular, then we must distinguish between its formal object, and the concrete reality in which this object is found.[74] The formal object in this case is not a mere abstraction, but the formal quality attained by the will in some particular reality and by some determined act. It is not therefore identified with the object of the will in general; and this must apply to the last end, which is the object of the will par excellence.

As would be expected, this distinction is more clearly put forward in the treatise on the nature of the last end. St. Thomas inquires if there is some last end in general of human life, and describes the last end in general as being that which is desired for itself, moving us to will the means by which we intend to attain it.[75] The last end in general is hence the first or supreme good,[76] distinguished from an intermediary end in that it satisfies completely the desires of the agent; it is the abstract notion of consummate perfection, desirable in and for itself, which determines the concept of the supreme being in relation to the will. St. Thomas, however, is not much concerned in the *Prima Secundae* with this abstract notion, which properly pertains to

[70] The only author in whom I have found this distinction expressly proposed is M. Browne, O.P., *De Ultimo Fine et De Beatitudine*, Romae, Institutum Pontificium Internationale "Angelicum," 1936; pp. 22, 23, 100, and 101.

[71] *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 82, a. 4.

[72] *Ibid.*, ad 1um.

[73] *Ibid.*

[74] *Ibid.*, a. 3.

[75] *Ibid.*, ad 4um.

[76] *Ibid.*, ad 1um.

metaphysics. In the first question he considers the formal last end of man, and in the second he goes on to consider the material last end. In Article 5 he defines this formal last end, and at the same time, implicitly distinguishes it from the material last end, saying: "since everything desires its own perfection, a man desires for his ultimate end, that which he desires as his perfect and crowning good (*Cum unumquodque appetat suam perfectionem, illud appetit aliquis ut ultimum finem quod appetit ut bonum perfectivum et completivum suiipsius*)." "That (*Illud*)" here stands for that concrete object which is desired; what is formally desired is the "perfect and crowning good (*bonum perfectivum et completivum*)" of the particular man concerned. He does not desire merely the supreme good in general, but *his* supreme good (*suiipsius*). This is the formal last end; and in Article 7 it is expressly distinguished from the material last end,[77] which St. Thomas is about to treat in the next question. In Article 6, as is evident both from the context and from the proofs put forward, he is treating of the formal last end.

In a very illuminating text, which must be quoted in its entirety, St. Thomas admirably combines these considerations. When distinguishing the rational from the sensual appetite he says:

> The superior appetite, which is the will, tends directly to the formal reason of appetibility absolutely considered; just as the will primarily and principally seeks goodness itself, or usefulness itself, and so on; but it desires this or that thing secondarily, inasmuch as this thing participates the above mentioned formal reason of appetibility; and the reason for this is that rational nature has such great potentialities that an inclination to one determined thing would not be adequate for it, rather it needs a multitude and variety of things; therefore its inclination is to something general, something common to many; and so through knowledge of this common thing, it tends to the particular desirable thing in which it knows there is this formal reason appetibility.[78]

[77] "De Ultimo Fine possumus loqui dupliciter: uno modo secundum rationem ultimi finis; alio modo secundum id in quo ratio ultimi finis invenitur."

[78] "Appetitus autem superior, qui est voluntas, tendit directe in rationem

Here it is expressly stated that the object of the will in general is the "formal reason of appetibility absolutely considered (*ratio appetibilitatis absolute*)"; so that the last end in general is similarly the "formal reason of the perfectly satisfying good (*ratio boni perfecti satiativi*)," or the "formal reason of perfectly satisfying perfect good (*ratio appetibilitatis perfecte satiantis*)." This is an abstract notion, "something general, common to many (*aliquid commune, quod in pluribus invenitur*)"; it is the abstract quality under which the will tends to the last end in particular, which is "the thing in which this formal reason is found (*res in qua hujusmodi ratio invenitur*)." Insofar as this "formal reason" is found in some concrete good, it is itself particularised; it is no longer the abstract quality common to many things, but the formal aspect of this particular good, the "formal reason of perfectly satisfying appetibility, not in the abstract, but as it is found in some concrete good (*ratio appetibilitatis perfecte satiantis, non in abstracto, sed ut inventa in aliquo bono concreto*)"; and this is the formal last end. This doctrine is in perfect harmony with the teaching of philosophers on the nature of object in general, from which it receives its final justification and clearest illustration. The object of a potency is generally divided into the formal and material object; and the formal object is further divided into the object "which (*quod*)" and "by which (*quo*)." This division is explained by John of St. Thomas:

That which primarily and *per se* (of itself), or formally, specifies, i. e., the form and reason of specification, is called the *per se* object, or the formal reason of object; all else, however, is called object secondarily, or by reason of something other than itself, and

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appetibilitatis absolute; sicut voluntas ipsam bonitatem appetit primo et principaliter, vel utilitatem vel aliquid huiusmodi; hanc vero rem vel istam appetit secundario, inquantum est praedictae rationis particeps; et hoc ideo quia natura rationalis est tantae capacitatis quod non sufficeret ei inclinatio ad unam rem determinatam, sed indiget rebus pluribus et diversis: et ideo inclinatio eius est in aliquid commune, quod in pluribus invenitur; et sic per apprehensionem illius communis tendit in rem appetibilem, in qua huiusmodi rationem appetendam esse cognoscit." *Q. D. de Ver.*, 25, a. 1.

materially. And the formal reason of specification, taken in itself, is usually called the formal reason under which (a thing is, or is classified) or the object by which (a thing is or is classified); however, considered in something joined to it, the thing so joined is called the reason which (the formal object which).[79]

This is a division of object in general, and hence must apply to that object which is the last end; and it is quite evident that the three formalities which we have been trying so far to explain coincide with these three divisions of an object in general. In the last end, insofar as it is the object of the will, we must distinguish the "reason under which—objective, not subjective—(*ratio sub qua—objectiva, non subjectiva—*)" or the "formal object under which (*objectum formale quo*)," which is the last end in general or in the abstract; the "reason which (*ratio quae*)" or the "formal object which (*objectum formal quod*)," which is the formal last end; and the "thing which (*res quae*)," or the material last end.

The formal last end is not, therefore, a mere abstraction, such as the last end in general, but it is formally the term of a particular desire, that which is formally desired in a particular act, although often in a confused manner; not necessarily explicitly, but at least implicitly. Since it is the formal aspect attained in the material last end by the will, it must always be apprehended as found in some object; but this object is not necessarily apprehended, in all man's acts, as being some particular good. Very often this object is thought of in a vague and confused way, just as being that thing which brings us perfect happiness, and not as some definite concrete reality. That this is possible is due to the imperfection of man's knowledge, which is also, as we have seen, the main reason for the possibility of venial sin in man. It is not psychologically neces-

[79] "Id quod per se vel primo aut formaliter specificat, seu forma et ratio specificandi, dicitur per se obiectum seu ratio obiecti; reliquum vero dicitur secundario seu per aliud et materialiter obiectum. Et ipsa ratio specificandi secundum se sumpta solet etiam dici ratio sub qua seu obiectum quo; ut autem consideratur in aliqua re afficiendo ipsam, dicitur res sic affecta ratio quae (obiectum formale quod)." *Cursus Philosophicus Thomisticus,* Logica, Pars II, q. XXI, a. IV. (Ed. a P. Beato Reiser, O.S.B., Marietti, 1930; p. 674.)

sary that a man, in willing some object as contributing to his more complete happiness, should always consider this object in its relation to that which he knows (habitually) can alone assure him perfect happiness. The will is a blind faculty; and while it necessarily tends towards its perfect good, it reaches out towards a particular object only insofar as that is known by the intellect; and the intellect does not always see all things in their relation to their ultimate causes, nor all means as related to their ultimate end. We might say that it concentrates all its intention on the one particular object that it is considering, and the immediate results of the choice of such an object; the last end is not actually considered, but dimly and obscurely recognised as that which brings supreme contentment. It is left indeterminate and confused; and hence man can tend towards his formal last end, that which is formally his supreme and perfect good, without desiring expressly any one particular thing as his material last end. He need not, therefore, in all his acts, be motived by the desire of his material last end as by some concrete reality; but he necessarily desires his supreme good and perfection, and can only desire an object insofar as it either is or leads to this perfection. That is to say that man necessarily wills, at least virtually, and in all his acts, his formal last end; he can will nothing unless it be, explicitly or implicitly, ordained to his absolute perfection; but it is by no means necessary that he should always desire that definite being which is, in reality, his material last end. This seems to be the genuine meaning of the principle laid down by St. Thomas in the *Prima Secundae*, Article 6; the will can desire nothing, unless under the formal aspect of either being the supreme and perfect good of the person concerned, or as leading to that supreme good; in all its deliberate acts, it always tends towards its formal last end, at least virtually; the material last end, insofar as it is some definite object, is not necessarily desired in this way.

This interpretation will also reconcile the authors who differ as to the term of the ordination essential to every human act. Those who say that this term is the last end in general, seem

to hold this opinion because it is evident that man does not, in every act, desire his material last end as that definite being which fully satisfies all his desires; those who say that this term is the last end in particular, rightly assert that man desires more than a mere abstraction, such as the last end in general. But it does not follow that man desires his material last end in every act; this would be the case if the last end in general and the formal last end were identical, as these authors assume. We have seen that the formal last end comes under the heading of the last end in particular, but is nevertheless distinct from the material last end. Hence we agree with the first class of authors in saying that the term in question is not the material last end; and with those of the second class, in asserting that it is not the last end in general, but in particular. Thus these two opinions are based on an inadequate division of the last end, objectively considered; the adequate division removes this divergence of opinion, and shows us the true meaning of the principle under discussion, and thus removes the doubts raised by its faulty interpretation against our solution of the last end of venial sin. The material last end of the man in the state of grace is God; it does not follow that his every act must be at least virtually ordained to God. All that the nature of a human act demands, in virtue of its very constitution, is that it be at least virtually ordained to the formal last end. This ordination is present in venial sin; the ordination to God is merely habitual.

We may now, for the sake of clarity, sum up the conclusions to which our investigation has led: 1) Man necessarily, in all his fully deliberate acts, is moved, at least virtually by the desire of his formal last end, which is his supreme good in so far as it brings him his full perfection and happiness; 2) He does not necessarily ordain all his acts, even virtually, to his material last end, which, for the man in the state of grace, is God; 3) He is bound to do this in virtue of the moral law, natural and divine, in all his acts; 4) Venial sins cannot, of their very nature, be thus ordained to God; 5) In the man in the state of grace, they are habitually ordained to God, insofar as they are either actually or virtually ordained to the formal last end, which is

habitually recognised and accepted as being attainable in its fulness only by union with God, so that man has subordinated his happiness and perfection to God; this subordination is effected by divine charity, which thus exercises an indirect influence even in venial sins. It may be more accurate to say that it exercises only a mediate influence over venial sins, but an indirect one over man's happiness; [50] Hence, venial sin is, generically, a human act deprived of that virtual ordination to God which it should possess, though habitually ordained to Him as to the material last end of the sinner.

It should be noted that this last conclusion refers only to the generic malice of venial sin. It does not follow that the essence of venial sin is the privation of the virtual ordination to God. The essence of a sin includes also its specific malice, which is the relation to the evil object of the act, the primary element of all sins; [51] and it is precisely because the act is evil that it cannot be thus ordained to God. The matter, or substance, of the act is its relation to its object; the formal element is its consequent inordination, the lack of its due ordination to its end.[51]

We can now answer the question: "What is the last end of venial sin?" The last end is precisely the same as for the meritorious act. The last end in general and the formal last end are the same, since they are the same for all fully human acts. The material last end is the same, for in each case it is God. But the manner of ordaining these acts to the material last end is different: the meritorious act is ordained at least virtually to it, while venial sin is only habitually ordained to it. Thus the last end is not a creature, and so the difficulty about mortal sin vanishes. The last end is God, but only habitually desired in the act; and so venial sin is distinct also from the meritorious act. Hence the distinction between venial sin and good acts is not in regard to the last end, but in regard to the manner of tending towards it.

[50] Cf. *Q. D. de Malo*, 7, a. 1.

[51] Cf. *Summa Theol.*, I-II, q. 18, a. 5, ad 2 um; q. 72, a. 1, ad 2um; a. 9, ad 1um; q. 75, a. 1; q. 85, a. 4; II-II, q. 6, a. 2 and ad 2um; q. 10, a. 3; *III Cont. Gent.*, 6.

Before concluding this study, a word of reference to another solution of our problem may not be out of place, since it rather confirms our solution, and may answer some difficulties raised against it. We have said that the act of venial sin is actually or virtually ordained to man's supreme good and perfect happiness, which is in turn habitually ordered to God. Some authors (for instance, Suarez, Curiel) say that this is impossible; the supreme good of the sinner cannot be ordained to God insofar as it is the term of the venial sin. But this objection holds only if we were to speak of the actual or virtual ordination of this supreme good to God. We do not require this, however; we say that this supreme good is only habitually ordained to God, and this is due to the influence of charity, as we have explained above.

Hence the last end to which venial sin is virtually ordained is the supreme good of the sinner; that which he, by his very nature, desires in all his acts is his supreme happiness. It is not the absolutely last end (*finis ultimus simpliciter*), since it is itself further ordained, though only habitually, to God. It is hence the last end only under a certain aspect (*finis ultimus secundum quid*), insofar as it is the last thing desired in the line of actual or virtual intention (*in ratione finis actualis vel virtualis*). Such a last end only excludes a further term to which it is virtually ordained; it admits a more ultimate term to which it is habitually ordained.[82] Hence we may agree with those authors who say that the ultimate end of venial sin in the line of actual or virtual intention is something created, the sinner's own happiness; this is only the last end under a certain aspect (*secundum quid*), and of this particular act; the absolutely last end of the sinner is God.[83]

[82] Cf. Salmanticenses, Tr. VIII, Disp. IV, Dub. IV, nn. 83 and 86; Gonet, "De Vitiis et Peccatis," Disp. IX, a. 4, n. 72.

[83] St. Thomas allows this distinction of the last end into "finis ultimus simpliciter" and "finis ultimus secundum quid." He proposes it in *Summa Theologica*, I-II, q. 11, a. 3 and q. 16, a. 3, that is, treating of "fruitio" and "usus." Fruition regards the absolutely last end, while use, if allowed with regard to the last end, can only be in relation to the partial last end. He also distinguishes mortal from venial sin

This subordination of ends is possible in man on account of the subordination of nature to the supernatural order. The end to which an agent tends corresponds to the principle of action, which is the nature of the agent. Man, besides his rational nature, has been gifted with a superior nature, namely, sanctifying grace, a divine nature which seeks, by means of charity, to ordain all man's acts to God, the Author of the supernatural order. Thus, man is in possession of two radical principles of activity, to which correspond two ends of his activity, natural and supernatural. In venial sin man is not moved to action by the divine nature in which he participates; he abstracts, as it were, from the divine nature he has received, and acts for merely natural motives; the principle of this act is nature, considered apart from grace, though grace retains an indirect influence even in this action; and hence the end intended is merely natural, that happiness and perfection which his nature leads him to seek. Thus, man's actual or virtual intention in such an act does not extend beyond this end, which may therefore be said to be his last end in this act. Yet he has subordinated his natural life and activity, and its end, to that of grace; so that this natural end is not absolutely ultimate, nor is it desired efficaciously as ultimate, in such a manner that it would dominate all his activity. His motives for acting are merely natural; but he has subordinated his natural activity to the higher working of grace, and is resolved not to do anything that would destroy this subordination; and so, this, as it were, static subordination of the natural to the supernatural in man is reflected dynamically in the subordination of ends corresponding to these natures; and this assures the habitual ordination of all man's acts to God.

This solution, then, by distinguishing the absolutely last end, efficaciously desired, from the partial ultimate end, inefficaciously and conditionally desired, coincides with the solution we have put forward; but its inner meaning is not fully seen

insofar as mortal sin is the fruition of creatures, while venial is their use. By linking up these considerations, he insinuates the solution we are considering.

unless it is placed in the background of the other considerations that have been recalled to memory. It, in its turn, completes our solution, and shows us how man does not use that supernatural source of activity given him by God, by which he is raised to a higher plane and ordained to a higher end. He allows this wonderful divine dynamic force to remain inert and inactive within him, and acts from merely natural motives, though not so as to drive out this supernatural principle. This divine nature raises him to the dignity of a son of God by adoption; henceforth he is bound to act in accordance with this nature. Noblesse oblige; and so he must show himself worthy of this divine dignity. He belongs to the divine family, being a brother of Christ and a son of the Eternal Father, and must order all his acts to the glory of this heavenly Father. Venial sin lacks this ordination; it is that act by which the son of God turns aside from his Father's business, to linger with some passing pleasure, which he knows will not grievously offend his Father. It is the momentary succumbing to the petulant cry of nature, not yet fully subdued to the sweet law of grace. The exile from his Father's home stops for a moment in the long and weary journey homewards, attracted by the seducing pleasures that surround him, or overcome by fatigue; but he does not give up in despair, nor turn back to the earthly city which he has quitted. His face is ever turned towards that true source of light and life and joy, his God and his Father, waiting to welcome him into the eternal joys of the heavenly mansion.

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# THE THOMISTIC CONCEPT OF DEVOTION

THE same general influence that was behind false Humanism, and, more important at the present time, behind Liberalism and Humanitarianism, the same influence that was behind the great Protestant heresy, is by no means dormant even today. It can best be described as the anthropocentric outlook and is opposed to the outlook that is theocentric.

In dogmatic theology this tendency has resulted in the over-emphasis of one aspect of certain truths to the exclusion of others. Thus, for example, over-insistence upon man's part in his personal sanctification has led to the neglect of the work of the Holy Ghost in that sphere—so much so that in a very real sense the Holy Ghost has become "The Forgotten God." Again in the problem of man's freedom and God's universal causality, it is responsible for the attempt at solution which starts from the fact of man's freedom and, holding this as sacrosanct, is willing to tamper with the principle of God's universal causality. The result is the proposal of a theory that is completely unacceptable from a theocentric point of view. Yet a third example of the influence of this anthropocentric tendency is to be found in the attitude of mind that can conceive of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament as a prisoner, albeit, "A Prisoner of Love," or that thinks of visits to the Blessed Sacrament in terms of comfort and consolation to the hidden Christ. Interesting in this regard is the fact that Saint Thomas who so wrote—both quantitatively and qualitatively—of the Blessed Sacrament as to deserve the title of Eucharistic Doctor, speaks of Christ in the Sacrament of the Altar as "King," as "Hidden Godhead," as "Son of God," as "Loving Pelican," as "Lord," and of the Blessed Sacrament as "Bread of Angels," "Bread of Heaven," "Living Bread," "Life-giving Bread," "Remembrance of Christ's Passion," but never of the "Prisoner of Love," nor the object of consolation or of comfort. His mind was too full of the Eternal Majesty which it "failed in trying to contemplate," to have time for such anthropocentric expressions as these.

In moral theology the anthropocentric outlook is responsible for casuistry—the system which, insofar as such an absurdity is possible, tries to take God out of theology. In worship it has resulted in the encouragement of a multitude of aliturgical devotions. This is true to such an extent that liturgy has become a

question of pleasing the people rather than of educating them. In church art it is the cause of a sentimentality and superficiality that is unworthy of the Supreme Being to Whom it attempts to pay homage.

Obviously if these things are the result of an anthropocentric outlook, the theocentric is their corrective. This is effected by a proper appreciation in the life of the Christian of the virtue of religion. And this appreciation in turn means the restoration to its place of supreme importance of the first and principal act of religion which is devotion. For devotion has been cast down from the place that required the greatest theologians of the Church and centuries of doctrinal development to discover for it. So true is this that devotion has again become the nebulous, undetermined anything whatsoever that it was before the great saints and theologians undertook to establish its identity. And even Saint Francis of Sales, whom Cayré calls, " The Master of Modern Spirituality," and of whom he says that he is without equal in influence in that field,[1] has to a certain extent at least, ignored all that preceding theologians have done, and has defined devotion as " a certain degree of excellence in charity." [2]

It is in an attempt to show how much the true concept of devotion differs from that which is ordinarily attributed to it that this study has been undertaken. More particularly, it is with the object of showing precisely what Saint Thomas has contributed to that concept. For while it is perfectly true to say that his doctrine on devotion is original, it is not true in the sense that it is a complete negation of all the doctrine that preceded him. It is still less true to say that his is the doctrine of a particular theologian or even of a particular school. It is the doctrine of the Church expressed by the majority of her great theologians, though not, we grant, with the clarity, completeness and beauty that is to be found in the *Summa Theologica* of the Angelic Doctor.

No attempt has been made here to determine the sources of Saint Thomas' doctrine, nor to propose all the doctrine on devotion that is to be found in the various periods of the Church's history. It is our purpose, rather, to determine precisely what the Angelic Doctor did in bringing to an illuminating culmination the efforts of his predecessors.

The works in which Saint Thomas treated of devotion are considered, as far as possible, in a chronological order. For his teaching on devotion is not the same in his earlier works as it is in the

[1] Cf. *Patrologie et Histoire de la Théologie,* F. Cayré, A. A. Vol. II, p. 841.
[2] *L'Introduction à la vie devote,* I, c. 1.

*Summa Theologica*. After tracing the development of his doctrine through his successive works we shall conclude with a short treatment of the place of devotion in the scheme of Christian perfection, as this has been explained for us by two of Saint Thomas' greatest commentators in applying the doctrine which he refined.

## I. SAINT THOMAS' CONCEPT OF DEVOTION AS CONTAINED IN HIS *COMMENTARY ON THE SENTENCES OF PETER LOMBARD*

1. *Introduction.* Because Saint Thomas defines devotion in the *Summa Theologica* as the act by which man is prompt to worship God,[3] there is a strong temptation in tracing his doctrine on devotion in his works earlier than and contemporary with the *Summa* to conclude that wherever he uses the word, " prompt," he has reference to the act which in the *Summa* has so determined a meaning and so important a position. But such a conclusion is not warranted for there is a promptitude natural to man's will, resulting from creation and varying in degree in different people.[4] There is proper to every virtue a readiness to action that does not require the influx of any special quality or act of promptitude. It is a part of the ease of operation which Saint Thomas many times assigns to habits, as he does, for example, when he says that habits in the will are necessary in order that the will be inclined to operate more promptly;[5] or again when he says that by the moral virtues the appetites are disposed to give prompt obedience to reason.[6] Then there is the special promptitude that derives from the gifts of the Holy Ghost, a promptitude so essential to these sublime habits that the Angelic Doctor includes it in their very definition.[7] It would be unsafe, therefore, to conclude from the isolated use of the word promptitude, a use that occurs time and again throughout the

[3] Devotio nihil aliud esse videtur quam voluntas quaedam prompte tradendi se ad ea quae pertinent ad Dei famulatum (II-II, q. 82, a. 1, c).

[4] Videmus in hominibus ex parte corporis magnam diversitatem, secundum quod unus alio ad bonum et malum promptior est, ut patet in diversis hominum complexionibus. Ergo oportet quod eorum animae ex sua creatione diversitatem habeant (*II Sent.*, d. XXXII, q. 2, a. 3, Sed Contra 1).

[5] Voluntas ex ipsa natura potentiae inclinatur in bonum rationis. Sed quia hoc bonum multipliciter diversificatur, necessarium est ut ad aliquod determinatum bonum rationis voluntas per aliquem habitum inclinetur, ad hoc quod sequatur promptior operatio (*Summa Theol.*, I-II, q. 50, a. 5, ad 3um).

[6] Virtutes morales habitus quidam sunt, quibus vires appetitivae disponuntur ad prompte obediendum rationi (*Ibid.*, q. 68, a. 3, c).

[7] Dona Spiritus Sancti sunt quidam habitus quibus homo perficitur ad prompte obediendum Spiritui Sancto (*Ibid.*).

works of Saint Thomas, that the promptitude of devotion is intended. And if in addition it is doubtful, as seems probable, whether Saint Thomas limited the notion of devotion to a very well-defined promptitude, prior to his treatment of it in the *Summa*, then the conclusion that he used promptitude and devotion interchangeably in his earlier writings would be very unsound indeed.

The first work of the Angelic Doctor to be considered in tracing his doctrine on devotion is his commentary on the four books of *The Sentences* of Peter Lombard. The natural point at which attention centers is his tract on justice [8] and more particularly his question on the virtue of religion,[9] for this is the place in which he treats devotion in the *Summa*. But neither in the article on justice nor in the question on the virtue of religion is the word devotion to be found. And since it is still too soon in this paper to conclude to the use of any expression which Saint Thomas may have considered the equivalent of devotion, there remains the alternative of determining its meaning by the study of its use in other places in the *Commentary on the Sentences.*

2. *Devotion and merit.* In his commentary on the second book of the *Sentences* Saint Thomas, speaking of meriting grace, determines that the degree of merit depends upon three things: the degree of charity and grace; the degree of promptitude or voluntariness; and the difficulty of attaining the object.[10] Since he segregates the promptitude of the will from charity and the degree of charity and places it on a par with that virtue as a necessary determinant of the degree of merit, he seems to require a special promptitude over and above that which charity itself as a habit and a virtue gives to its acts. It is possible, therefore, that even at this early date Saint Thomas began to invest devotion with some of the importance that he assigns to it in the *Summa Theologica*. This possibility is confirmed by the close connection between merit and prayer. And, as shall later appear, Saint Thomas in the *Sentences* links prayer and devotion very clearly together. Against this conclusion, however, is an article on merit in the *Summa* in which Saint Thomas says that the promptitude that increases merit is from charity.[11] It is impossible, therefore, to conclude with cer-

[8] *III Sent.*, d. XXXIII, q. 3, a. 4. [9] *Ibid.*, qt. 1.

[10] Quanto voluntas promptior est ad operandum, tanto homo magis meretur. . . . Quanto enim majori charitate et gratia actus informatur, tanto magis est meritorius; similiter etiam quanto magis est voluntarium, plus habet de ratione meriti et laudabilis; similiter etiam quanto magis objectum est arduum, tanto magis est actus meritorius . . . ceteris paribus (*II Sent.*, d. XXIX, q. 1, a. 4).

[11] Unicuique est laboriosum et difficile quod non prompta voluntate facit; et talis labor diminuit meritum, et a charitate tollitur (*Summa Theol.*, I-II, q. 114, a. 4,

tainty either that Saint Thomas is or that he is not speaking of devotion in this place.

In distinction XL of Second *Sentences*,[11a] the word devotion itself occurs for the first time. "She merited before God," says the Angelic Doctor in speaking of the widow who cast into the treasury two brass mites,[12] "a greater reward than those who offered a larger amount with less devotion." [13] From the use of the word here several things are clear. Devotion is essentially interior and from the will. This is evident from the fact that precisely because of the devotion with which the small offering of the widow is given, it becomes more meritorious than the larger offerings of others. Indeed precisely because of devotion, that which is externally smaller becomes larger than what is offered by the others. It is important, too, to note that devotion is here clearly used in connection with an act of the virtue of religion—contributing to the support of divine worship. Its use, however, still leaves in doubt the solution of two vital questions—the status of devotion as an act, a mode of action, or a general quality of the soul, and the precise meaning of the word devotion itself. It could in this place very well mean fervor, for it is in contrast with tepidity of will spoken of in the same article.[14]

3. *Devotion and worship.* Third *Sentences* makes important use of the word devotion in the question on latria [15] and connects devotion intimately with piety. In order to determine the significance of its use here, it will be necessary to understand what meaning Saint Thomas attached to latria and piety in this place. "Latria," he says, "is a species of justice. It concerns itself with the worship due to God, rendering to Him that to which He has a right." [16] But this is the virtue of religion. Saint Thomas allows the conclusion, only reserving that religion is latria under the aspect of determined works of worship to the offering of which man binds

ad 2um). See also *IV Sent.*, d. XV, q. 1, a. 4, qt. 1, ad 2um. Similiter diminutio poenalitatis ex promptitudine voluntatis, quod facit charitas, non diminuit efficaciam satisfactionis, sed auget.

[11a] I. e., St. Thomas' *Commentary on the Second Book of the Sentences of Peter Lombard.* Hereinafter this condensed form of reference to the different books of the *Sentences* will be employed.

[12] *Lk.* xxi, 1-4.

[13] Vidua illa plus aliis misisse dicitur, quia efficaciori voluntate illud dedit; unde magis merebatur apud Deum de praemio essentiali quam illi qui majora munera minori devotione dabant (*II Sent.*, d. XL, q. I, a. 3, ad 5um).

[14] *Ibid.*, ad 1um.

[15] *III Sent.*, d. IX, q. 1, a. 1, qt. 4.

[16] Reddere debitum est actus justitiae. Sed latria est cultus Deo debitus; unde exhibet Deo quod ei debetur. Ergo latria est pars justitia (*III Sent.*, d. IX, q. 1, a. 1, Sed Cont. 2).

himself as to that which is God's right.[17] Piety, he here defines, as latria under the aspect of that which is its first effect, namely, devotion.[18] Hence he makes the clear and significant statement that devotion is the first effect of religion, for religion, latria, and piety are here used by Saint Thomas merely as different names for the same virtue.[19] A little later Saint Thomas insists upon the point that piety as it is accepted here consists in devotion toward God to Whom worship is given and in this precisely it differs from the gift of piety. "The gift," Saint Thomas says, "consists in a certain benevolence not limited or judged by human standards but by the divine, and the object of this benevolence is not only God but man also."[20] It is curious to think of man being benevolent toward God. Yet in a certain sense man is. Saint Thomas explains in what sense when he says that the virtue of piety has God for its object but God as the giver of all things to Whom a debt is owed. The gift, however, sees God not as a creditor but as one who is worthy of honor in Himself apart from any of His gifts.[21] By reason of this distinction between the virtue and the gift of piety, the Angelic Doctor has irrevocably linked devotion with the virtue of religion. He has placed devotion in direct antithesis to benevolence and thus orientated its essential note as one of obligation and servitude. Besides confirming what he has already determined—that devotion is interior, from the will, and pertaining essentially to the virtue of religion—he has added here the important notion that devotion is the first effect of religion. But he leaves unanswered, for the present, the question of the nature of the effect. Is it an act, a mode of action, or a disposition of the soul? Is it restricted in its meaning to promptitude in the service of God, or does it include all that the notion of service includes?

4. *Devotion and the Sacraments.* In the Fourth Book of

[17] Latria dicitur religio quantum ad determinationem operum ad quae homo se obligando in cultum Dei determinat (*Ibid.*, qt. 4).

[18] Latria dicitur pietas quantum ad effectum devotionis, quod primum occurrit (*Ibid.*).

[19] Quandoque latria sumitur pro habitu quo exhibetur obsequium. Hoc modo est virtus. Et nominatur haec virtus quatuor nominibus . . . pietas . . . theosebeia . . . latria . . . religio (*Ibid.*).

[20] Pietas secundum quod donum, consistit in quadam benevolentia supra modum humanum ad omnes; sed pietas, secundum quod hic accipitur, consistit in quadam devotione ad Deum, cui latria exhibetur (*Ibid.*, ad 4um).

[21] Quamvis pietas virtus quae latria dicitur, ipsi Deo exhibeatur; in hoc tamen accipit aliquid humanum pro mensura, scilicet beneficium a Deo acceptum, ratione cujus est debitor ei; sed pietas quae est donum, accipit in hoc aliquid divinum pro mensura, ut scilicet Deo honorem impendat, non quia sit ei debitus, sed quia Deus honore dignus est . . . (*III Sent.*, d. XXXIV, q. 3, a. 2, qt. 1, ad 1um).

*Sentences*, the thread of devotion is picked up again in the tract on the sacraments. Does its place here imply a retrogression from Saint Thomas' doctrine in Third *Sentences*? He has already bound up devotion with religion in a manner that will require a complete about face to change. What have the sacraments to do with the virtue of religion? It will be legitimate in answering this question to have recourse to the *Summa Theologica*, for although Saint Thomas does not express the doctrine of the *Summa* on this point in the *Sentences*, yet the fact that he gives devotion so much attention in the tract on the sacraments in the *Sentences* is proof unquestionable that his doctrine on this point was constant. In his prologue to the tract on exterior acts of worship in the *Summa*, Saint Thomas says that these acts are of three kinds—those by which man offers to God his own body, namely, adoration; those by which he offers his external possessions, for example, sacrifice and oblation; and finally those by which something that is already God's is used by man in his worship of God.[22] In the special prologue to his discussion of this last class of acts, the Angelic Doctor says that these are of two kinds, the sacraments and the divine name itself.[23] And in the *Summa* as in the *Sentences*, he reserves the treatment of the sacraments, because of their immense importance to man, to a special place. But that he sees them as the material for acts of worship is evident and thus his repeated insistence on devotion in his treatment of the sacraments in Fourth *Sentences*, far from weakening his doctrine on the connection between religion and devotion, gives to it overwhelming confirmation.

*a*) The first mention of devotion in Fourth *Sentences* occurs in the question on the equality or inequality of the grace received in Baptism. Saint Thomas there says that those who receive Baptism better prepared than others in faith and devotion receive greater grace.[24] To the question that naturally arises whether, then, devotion is the cause of grace, Saint Thomas answers immediately and in his answer for the first time places devotion

[22] Postea considerandum est de exterioribus actibus latriae,—et primo de adoratione, per quam aliquis suum corpus ad Deum venerandum exhibet; secundo de illis actibus quibus aliquid de rebus exterioribus Deo offertur; tertio de actibus quibus ea quae Dei sunt, assumuntur (*Summa Theol.*, II-II, Prologus ad Quaest. LXXXIV).

[23] Deinde considerandum est de actibus exterioribus latriae, quibus aliquid divinum ab hominibus assumitur, quod est vel sacramentum aliquod, vel ipsum nomen divinum (*Ibid.*, Prologus ad Quaest. LXXXIX).

[24] . . . quia tamen quidam ad baptismum cum majori praeparatione fidei et devotionis accedunt quam alii; ideo quidam aliis majorem gratiam consequuntur (*IV Sent.*, d. IV, q. 2, a. 3, qt. 2).

in a category of being. "Devotion," he says, "is not an efficient co-cause with Baptism in the production of grace in the soul of the person baptized. It is rather a material disposition to the reception of Baptism, and thus according to its difference in different persons the effect of Baptism is participated." [25] He seems to be picturing Baptism as a form coming to matter that is more or less perfectly disposed, much in the same manner in which the soul comes as the substantial form of the body in man. And it is interesting to recall how much importance Saint Thomas attaches to the more or less perfect disposition of the matter with regard to the ultimate perfection of that which results from the union of the matter and the form. For it is his doctrine that the substantially greater perfection of one person over another is due to the more perfect disposition of the matter into which the soul is infused, because the soul as a form is received according to the capacity of the recipient.[26] Hence devotion is the material cause of the grace received in Baptism. By reason of its inherence in a subject, it is an accidental and not a substantial entity. It is not merely the negative removal of the impediment of sin that would impede the effect of baptism but a positive disposition which, according as it is greater or less, is the material cause of a greater or less infusion of grace in the soul.[27]

In the succeeding question Saint Thomas again mentions the necessity of devotion in those who receive baptism. He says that it is necessary for anyone who is to receive the effect of any agent to be properly disposed for the reception of that effect. And he distinguishes between the reception of the sacrament itself, by which he seems to mean reception of the character of the sacrament, and the reception of the principal effect of the sacrament which is, of course, as in all the sacraments, grace. It is important to note that he requires devotion on the part of the recipient both for the reception of the sacrament itself and for the reception of its principal effect. With regard to the sacrament itself, he says that in all action, contact between the agent and the thing acted upon is

[25] Devotio baptizati non additur quasi concausa, ut efficienter agat ad gratiae receptionem, sed additur quasi dispositio materialis: et ideo secundum diversitatem ipsius participatur baptismi effectus (*IV Sent.*, d. IV, q. 2, a. 3, qt. 2, ad 1um).

[26] Manifestum est quod quanto corpus est melius dispositum tanto meliorem sortitur animam . . . . cujus ratio est, quia actus et forma recipitur in materia secundum materiae capacitatem (*Summa Theol.*, I. q. 85, a. 7, c).

[27] Quando adultus baptizatur non solum requiritur ad percipiendum baptismi effectum removens prohibens, scilicet, fictionem, sed et requiritur dispositio quasi materialis, scilicet, devotio et fides recipientis baptismi; et secundum quod magis vel minus invenitur dispositus, effectus baptismi diversimode consequitur (*IV Sent.*, d. IV, q. 2, a. 3, qt., ad 2um).

necessary. Thus in baptism the recipient must in some way be joined to the sacrament which is to produce in him certain effects. This is accomplished in the intellect by faith and in the will by devotion.[28] His principle is merely a statement of the fact that when an agent is to act upon something the thing must in some way be present to it.[29] It is devotion, then, that makes contact between the sacrament and the will of man. It does so, as has been seen, not only by removing impediments to the sacrament but by positively disposing to its worthy reception. The effect of the sacrament also depends upon devotion. Faith purifies the heart; contrition removes the impediment of sin. "But contrition," says Saint Thomas, "is included in devotion."[30] Has Saint Thomas reference here to the important work of the virtue of religion in imperating the other virtues or does he consider contrition to be properly a part of devotion without the need of religion becoming imperative in making it so? The answer to this question can be better given later when Saint Thomas begins to speak of actual devotion. The linking of faith and devotion as the two prerequisites to baptism should be noted in passing. This point is also cleared up in the explanation of what Saint Thomas understood by actual devotion.

The last time that the Angelic Doctor speaks of devotion in this passage on the sacrament of baptism, he decides that Saint Augustine uses the word devotion in a special sense and not as it is generally understood. "Saint Augustine," he says, "understood devotion in baptism as the intention of receiving the sacrament in its entirety both with regard to the sacrament itself and with regard to the effect of the sacrament. The lack, in the person being baptized, of devotion in this sense is always a mortal sin." "But," he goes on to say, "the lack of devotion inasmuch as it implies the fervor of charity in reverence to God and the things of God is not always a mortal sin."[31] In other words, he seems to say that de-

[28] Quia autem omnis actio est per contactum ideo necessarium est quod recipiens sacramentum quodammodo contingat ipsum: et per intellectum, quem quidem contactum facit fides: et per affectum quem contactum facit devotio: et ideo indispositus reputatur et qui non credit et qui indevotus accedit (*Ibid.*, q. 3, a. 2, qt. 2).

[29] Nullius agentis quantumcumque virtuosi, actio procedit ad aliquid distans, nisi inquantum in illud per media agit (*Summa Theol.*, I, q. 8, a. 1, ad 3um).

[30] Et ideo Ambrosius dicit (super *Rom.* ii, "sine poenitentia sunt dona Dei et vocatio") quod non sunt necessaria ex hac parte (that is for the reception of the effect of baptism) nisi fides et contritio, tamen contritio etiam in devotione includitur (*IV Sent.*, d. IV, q. 3, a. 2, qt. 2).

[31] Devotio hic [i. e., in Saint Augustine's, *De Baptismo contra Donatist.*, cap. 53, l. 7], accipitur voluntas consequendi baptismum totaliter et quantum ad sacramentum et quantum ad rem sacramenti, et hujus devotionis defectus non potest sine peccato

votion is the fervor of charity in worship. It is not to be concluded at once that devotion is here described as a mode of the virtue of charity. First of all, Saint Thomas has said that devotion properly has to do with the virtue of religion and he must not be accused without good reason of being in a state of indecision with regard to its true character. Moreover he says here that devotion is the fervor of charity *in worship*, and worship, of course, belongs to the virtue of religion. But why does he use the expression "fervor of charity" with regard to devotion? The explanation seems to lie in the supreme imperation of every virtue by the virtue of charity.[32] As the highest virtue, charity uses all the virtues for its own end, which is the highest end—the attainment of God as He is in Himself.[33] And thus Saint Thomas can speak of the fervor of charity in worship because of the fact that charity uses worship in such a way that an act of worship, while still remaining an act of worship, becomes an act of charity by reordination to the end of charity.

*b*) Saint Thomas next speaks of devotion in his treatment of the sacrament of the Eucharist. "He alone receives the sacrament spiritually," he says, "who has faith in and charity toward Christ together with devotion and the desire to receive the sacrament even though he does not do so sacramentally."[34] Worthy of note here again is the linking of devotion with faith and with charity. In the answer to one of the objections in the same place, the Angelic Doctor insists that in this sacrament also, as in baptism, a greater infusion of grace is received by one who receives the sacrament with devotion.[35] A little further on, following Saint Bernard, Saint Thomas makes devotion to hearing the word of God a conjectural sign of freedom from sin.[36]

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mortali esse: quamvis defectus devotionis prout importat fervorem charitatis in reverentia Dei et divinorum possit esse sine peccato mortali (*IV Sent.*, d. IV, q. 3, a. 2, qt. 2, ad 3um).

[32] Motus humanae mentis ad fruitionem divini boni est proprius actus charitatis, per quem omnes actus aliarum virtutum ordinantur in hunc finem, secundum quod aliae virtutes imperantur a charitate (*Summa Theol.*, I-II, q. 114, a. 4, c).

[33] Charitas attingit ipsum Deum, ut in ipso sistat (*Ibid.*, II-II, q. 23, a. 6, c).

[34] Manducat spiritualiter hoc sacramentum [that is, the Eucharist] solum ille qui habet fidem et charitatem ad Christum cum devotione et proposito sumendi hoc sacramentum etiam si sacramentaliter non manducet (*IV Sent.*, d. IX, q. 1, a. 2, qt. 4).

[35] . . . qui spiritualiter manducavit in proposito et devotione habuit manducationem sacramentalem, ad quam accedens ex ipsa vi sacramenti majorem gratiam consequitur: unde non sequitur quod sacramentalis manducatio superfluat (*Ibid.*, ad 1um).

[36] Potest tamen de hoc [that is, of freedom from sin] haberi aliqua conjectura, praecipue per quattuor signa, sicut Bernardus dicit. (Bernardus in *Sermone Septua-*

In the twelfth distinction, which continues to treat of the sacrament of the Eucharist, Saint Thomas emphasizes the necessity of actual devotion. He has determined in speaking of baptism that devotion is like a material disposition that receives the form or the sacrament in a manner analogous to the way the body receives the soul in man. Here he insists upon actual devotion.

The acquiring of any perfection is impeded by the taking away of the disposition proper to it. Material dispositions have the same relation to the form as an act has to its end. Hence actual devotion is necessary in the reception of the Eucharist in order that it produce the fullness of its effect, for this sacrament perfects man by uniting him in a special way with his end. And because without mortal sin, actual devotion can sometimes be impeded by reason of distraction or venial sins, which destroy the acts of the virtues, it follows that the effect of the Eucharist can sometimes be impeded with no guilt of mortal sin involved, so that grace is not increased in the recipient.[37]

In order to show that devotion must become actual in order to produce the fulness of its effect, Saint Thomas has here made use of the principle that the end informs and specifies the act.[38] The end is the form of the act as the soul is the form of the body. And because the Eucharist is like an end in that it joins man in an ineffable way with his end, the matter which it is to inform, so to speak, must be not a disposition merely but a disposition actualized. So that the habitual devotion sufficient for the reception of the sacrament itself, and even, to a certain extent, for the effect of the sacrament (for the sacraments cause grace of themselves), is not sufficient for the fullness and superabundance of the effect. Actual devotion is required for this. Does this doctrine make of devotion a special act? It does not seem so. Saint Thomas still retains the conception that devotion is a material disposition. But

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*gesimae,* circa med.) Primo, cum quis devote verba Dei audit; quia qui est ex Deo, verba Dei audit (*John* viii) (*Ibid.*, a. 3, qt. 2).

[37] Omnis perfectio impeditur per remotionem propriae dispositionis. Sicut autem dispositiones materiales se habent ad perfectionem formae, ita actus se habet ad perfectionem finis: unde cum hoc sacramentum perficiat conjungendo fini . . . ad hoc quod effectum suum plene habeat in sumente, oportet quod adsit actualis devotio. Et quia interdum absque mortali peccato actualis devotio impediri potest, cum distractiones variae ipsam impediant, et peccata venialia virtutum actum tollant, absque peccato mortali potest effectus hujus sacramenti [that is, the Eucharist] impediri: ita quod aliquis augmentum gratiae non consequantur (*IV Sent.*, d. XII, q. 2, a. 1, qt. 3).

[38] Sicut res naturalis habet speciem ex sua forma ita actio habet speciem ex objecto (*Summa Theol.*, I-II, q. 18, a. 2, c). Objectum habet quodammodo rationem formae, inquantum dat speciem (*Ibid.*, ad 2um).

he adds here that it must become actual at times. It would appear to be reasonably evident from this that Saint Thomas considers devotion insofar as it is a disposition, to be a general condition or state of the soul resulting from the presence of many virtues and chiefly ordained to the ultimate end of all the moral virtues, namely, the worship of God, which comprises the proper object of the virtue of religion. For the virtue of religion is the highest moral virtue, having for its object the highest object that any virtue can have except it be one of the theological virtues, which have God for their object. And thus it follows that although religion falls far short of the dignity of the theological virtues, it is the connecting link between them and the other moral virtues, because, while it has not for its object, God, it has the next best thing—the worship of God.[39] Such a disposition or condition of the soul would, of course, become actual by eliciting an act that partook of the mode of all the virtues combining to bring about this disposition, this devotion in the soul. An act of love of God, for example, that was full of faith, hope, and humility and ordained to the worship of God, would seem to be as close an approach as possible to what Saint Thomas must have understood by actual devotion. And because it was ordained to the worship of God, such an act would be an act not of faith, nor of hope, nor of humility, nor even of charity, but an act of religion.

A little further on in this place, Saint Thomas distinguishes between the impediment placed to this sacrament by mortal sin and that which is placed by venial sin. He has reference again to the principle that the sacraments give grace of themselves if mortal sin is not in the soul as an obstacle. Here is to be found his statement that this quality of the soul called devotion is the result not of the presence of all the virtues but rather of certain specific ones closely connected with the virtue of religion and the sacrament of the Eucharist. "Not every venial sin," he says, "impedes the effect of this sacrament but only that which takes away the actual devotion that is required in its reception."[40] What these virtues are in particular can be determined with a satisfactory degree of

[39] Religio magis de propinquo accedit ad Deum quam aliae virtutes morales, in quantum operatur ea quae directe et immediate ordinantur in honorem divinum. Et ideo religio praeeminet inter alias virtutes morales (*Summa Theol.*, II-II, q. 81, a. 6, c).

[40] Quamvis peccatum veniale non faciat fictum simpliciter, facit tamen fictum quoad aliquid, nec tamen dicendum quod omne peccatum veniale impediat effectum hujus sacramenti, sed solum illud quod tollit actualem devotionem quae exigitur in hoc sacramento (*IV Sent.*, d. XII, q. 2, a. 1, qt. 3, ad 1um).

accuracy both from the nature of the sacrament of the Eucharist itself and from the virtues that Saint Thomas has mentioned in connection with the sacrament and with devotion. Reception of the sacrament of the Eucharist postulates first of all, faith. For this sacrament is in a special way the sacrament of faith. Man is required in this one case alone in the whole of the universe to deny the testimony of his senses and to adhere solely by faith to the word of God.

> Sight, touch and taste in Thee are each deceived
> The ear alone most safely is believed.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> The Godhead only, on the cross lay hid from view
> But here lies hid at once the manhood too,
> And I in both professing my belief. . . .[41]

Secondly the sacrament of the Eucharist is, as Saint Thomas has called it, " the pledge of future glory," and its recipient must have the virtue of hope.[42] Again the sacrament of Eucharist is the sacrament of love and as such requires charity in the one receiving it.

> O Loving Pelican, O Jesu Lord. . . .[43]

Fourthly, both because the Eucharist is a sacrament and because it is a sacrifice, it is part of the worship man gives to God. So it requires the virtue of religion.

> O Godhead hid devoutly I adore Thee
> Who truly art within the forms before me. . . .[44]

And finally, the sacrament of the Eucharist is the sacrament of humility, in which Christ hides not only his divine nature but His humanity as well, and comes to man as food and drink. So man in receiving Him must have the virtue of humility.

> To Thee I bow my head with bended knee
> As failing quite in contemplating Thee.[45]

Saint Thomas may have included other virtues in his concept of the material disposition which he called devotion, but it seems reasonably certain that these five, faith, hope, charity, religion and humility, were first. The number of times, too, that Saint Thomas has linked faith and charity with devotion is significant in the light of this conclusion. In this regard, it is interesting to note a state-

[41] *Adoro Te.* Trans. by Brian Higgins.
[42] O sacrum convivium . . . et futurae gloriae nobis pignus datur. (*Magnificat* Antiphon, Second Vespers, Feast of *Corpus Christi*).
[43] *Adoro Te.* [44] *Ibid.* [45] *Ibid.*

ment the Angelic Doctor makes in the *Summa Theologica* when speaking of prayer. For, as shall be seen, he certainly considered prayer an act of religion even in the *Sentences*. He says in the *Summa*: "Prayer proceeds ultimately from charity, mediately, however, through the virtue of religion of which it is an act, and helped by other virtues which are necessary to its perfection, namely, by faith and by humility." [46] Thus with regard to the statement made here, it can readily be seen that there are many venial sins, sins especially of weakness as opposed to sins of malice, whose presence in the soul would not hinder the actual devotion which would be the result of the material disposition in the soul. But above all, the fact must not be lost sight of that whatever Saint Thomas considered the particular makeup of devotion to be, he always related it to the virtue of religion. Devotion either as a disposition or as actualized was always ordained to the worship of God and so a part of the highest moral virtue, the virtue of religion.

In the next article, Saint Thomas again stresses the importance of devotion in taking away venial sin, insisting not only that it is devotion that remits it, but that the measure of remission is exactly proportional to the measure of devotion.[47] And he implies what he plainly expresses a few lines further on, that the Eucharist not only increases habitual grace but also actual devotion.[48] This is evidently true, not only because the increase of grace intensifies the infused virtues which depend upon it, but also because the acts themselves of the virtues so specially connected with the reception of the Eucharist are aroused by the consideration of the love of God for men that the sacrament implies.

The Eucharist is not only a sacrament but also a sacrifice; it is worthy of note that Saint Thomas makes its satisfactory value depend upon the devotion with which it is offered.[49]

[46] Procedit oratio a charitate, mediante religione, cujus est actus oratio, concomitantibus etiam quibusdam aliis virtutibus quae ad bonitatem orationis requiruntur, scilicet, humilitate et fide (*Summa Theol.*, II-II, q. 83, a. 15, c).

[47] Tantus potest esse devotionis fervor quod omnia peccata venialia delet: neque est inconveniens quod aliqua hora homo sit absque omni peccato veniali, quamvis hoc diu durare non possit propter difficultatem vitandi peccata venialia, nec tamen oportet, quod semper omnia peccata venialia deleat, sed secundum mensuram devotionis quia non est proximus effectus ejus [that is, the sacrament of the Eucharist] deletio venialium, sed ex consequenti (*IV Sent.*, d. XII, q. 2, a. 2, qt. 1, ad 1um).

[48] In hoc sacramento non solum confertur gratia habitualis, sed excitatur fervor actualis devotionis; et ideo gratiae hujus sacramenti non solum mortalia sed etiam venialia opponuntur (*Ibid.*, ad 2um).

[49] Inquantum Eucharistia est sacrificium accipit rationem satisfactionis: et secundum hoc in parte vel in toto poena tollit, sicut et aliae satisfactiones secundum

In a striking comparison between the effect upon the body of heat and labor and the effect upon the soul of concupiscence and preoccupation with external affairs, Saint Thomas shows that just as the former destroy the natural moisture of the body and are counteracted by the taking of food, so concupiscence and preoccupation with externals destroy the devotion and fervor of the soul by which God is worshiped. And they are counteracted by the spiritual food received in the sacrament of the Eucharist.[50]

The Angelic Doctor fittingly concludes his treatment of the necessity of devotion to the sacrament of the Eucharist by the observation that in the primitive Church devotion flourished more because of the propinquity of that period to the passion of Christ.[51] For the passion of Christ was the great and perfect act of worship of God. All sacrifice before it looked forward to it and prefigured it. And all sacrifice since is worthy of the name and enjoys efficacy only because of and in the measure that it is united with it.

*5. Devotion and Prayer.* Saint Thomas gives as much place to devotion in his treatment of prayer in the Commentary on the *Sentences* as he gave it in his questions on Baptism and the Eucharist. He begins by making devotion the defense for public prayer.

Public prayer should be vocal as well as mental in order that the prayer that is expressed by the voice may excite others to devotion and to perseverance in their intention in prayer. It was for this reason that the chant of the church was instituted.[52]

But even in private prayer the voice is used to bring about devotion and then, because movements in the superior appetite, if they are strong enough, overflow into the inferior faculties, it often happens that devotion causes

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mensuram poenae debitae pro peccato et devotionis qua sacramentum offertur (*Ibid.*, qt. 3).

[50] Ea quae in hoc sacramento geruntur, habent similitudinem cum his quae accidunt in corporali nutrimento. Quia enim fit quasi continua deperditio naturalis humiditatis per actionem caloris naturalis, et exercitium laboris, ideo oportet frequenter corporalem cibum assumere ad restaurationem deperditi ne deperditio continua mortem inducat. Similiter etiam ex concupiscentia innata, et occupatione circa exteriora fit deperditio devotionis, et fervoris, secundum quae homo in Deum colligitur: unde oportet quod pluries deperdita restaurentur, ne homo totaliter alienetur a Deo (*IV Sent.*, d. XV, q. 3, a. 1, qt. 1).

[51] In primitiva Ecclesia vigebat devotio major ex propinquitate passionis Christi (*Ibid.*, qt. 3).

[52] Oratio publica . . . non debet solum esse mentalis sed vocalis etiam, ut per orationem voce expressam etiam alii ad devotionem excitentur et ad continuandum intentionem suam orantibus, et propter hoc etiam cantus ab ecclesia instituti sunt (*Ibid.*, q. 4, a. 2, qt. 1).

the one who is praying to break into audible words, and weeping, and sighs, and expressions of joy.[53]

He makes devotion the yardstick of prayer. "The thing to be considered principally in prayer is devotion," he says, "and if devotion can be sustained over a long period, then the period of prayer ought to be extended. If, however, prayer causes distaste or weariness, it is not to be protracted." [54] By devotion, as has been seen, Saint Thomas understood a spiritual quality and not a sensible feeling, and hence the distaste and weariness to which he opposes devotion are to be understood as a distaste and weariness of the will and not merely of the lower faculties and the body. Such a distaste is not, of course, to be confused with the sadness about divine things of which Saint Thomas speaks in the *Summa Theologica*,[55] and which he opposes to the virtue of charity.

"An exordium or introduction to prayer is sometimes required," Saint Thomas says, "to excite in the one who is praying a desire to pray devoutly." He contrasts this exordium to the introduction of speeches in which the audience was praised in order that it might be moved to give greater attention to the message that was to follow. The exordium in prayer has for its purpose the arousing of devotion in the person who is praying. "This devotion," he continues, "is aroused as by an exordium in two ways—first, by praising God, and secondly, by recognizing our own weakness." [56]

There are other places in which Saint Thomas speaks of devotion in his treatment of prayer but since these add nothing new to the doctrine, it will be unnecessary to study them in particular.

There are, however, several statements regarding prayer, religion and devotion that add confirmation and clarity to what has already been said. In the fifth article of this question, Saint Thomas

[53] Vox orationi adjungitur [in private prayer] propter quattuor. Primo, ut homo excitet seipsum verbis ad devote orandum. . . . Tertia, ex vehementia devotionis in orante vox sequitur quia motus superiorum virium, si sit fortis, etiam ad inferiores redundat: unde et cum mens orantis per devotionem accenditur, in fletus et suspira, et jubilos, et voces inconsiderare prorumpit (*Ibid.*).

[54] In oratione praecipue attenditur orantis devotio, et ideo tantum debet oratio protendi, quantum devotio orantis conservari potest: et ideo si diu possit devotio conservari, debet oratio esse diuturna et prolixa. Si autem prolixitas fastidium, vel taedium pariat oratio non est diutius protrahenda (*Ibid.*, qt. 2).

[55] *Summa Theol.*, II-II, q. 35.

[56] . . . exordium requiritur in oratione quantum ad excitandum orantis desiderium ad devote petendum. . . . Unde dupliciter oratio affectus ad devotionem quasi quodam exordio excitatur, scilicet, ex parte Dei, dum ipsum laudamus: et ex parte nostra, dum nostram infirmitatem recogitamus . . . (*IV Sent.*, d. XV, q. 4, a. 3, qt. 2).

declares with finality that prayer is an act of worship.[57] And when this statement is taken in conjunction with another which follows shortly after, considerable light will be brought to bear upon what the Angelic Doctor meant by actual devotion. He determines the difference between prayer that is meritorious and prayer that is efficacious in obtaining that which is requested. "All the prayers of one who is in the state of grace and charity are meritorious," he says, "but they do not always obtain what is requested, because frequently this is opposed to the designs of divine Providence.[58] He admits however, that it is possible so to pray that the thing asked for will certainly be obtained. And he places four conditions that make its being answered infallibly certain. They are that one pray piously, for himself, perseveringly, and for that which is conducive to his salvation. He goes on to give the reason for the first condition. One must pray piously because if he prays inordinately he places an impediment to the probability of his prayer being answered. "To pray piously," he continues, "is to remove this impediment to effective prayer. For the word *piously* itself implies a mode or manner of worship, as evidence of which, worship under one aspect is called piety." [59] It has been seen that the aspect under which worship is called piety is that of its first effect, namely, devotion. And Saint Thomas goes on to say that prayer in order to be effective ought to be modified or qualified by this mode of worship which he calls piety, and, as has been seen, which he makes synonymous with devotion.[60] Since he is speaking of prayer, it is evident that the devotion to which he has reference is actual devotion, for prayer itself is an act. Thus with fair exactitude, Saint Thomas describes devotion as a mode or manner of worship. And in the answer to one of the objections in this place, he is even more specific, saying that this piety of which he speaks includes all the circumstances of virtue which are necessary on the part of the one who is praying in order that he produce a perfect prayer.[61]

[57] Oratio est actus latriae (*Ibid.*, a. 5, qt. 1, ad 2um).

[58] Unde patet quod oratio ex charitate semper habet efficaciam merendi sed non semper habet efficaciam impetrandi, quia aliquid est quod repugnat impetrationi in providentia, Dei, ad quem oratur (*Ibid.*, a. 7, qt. 3).

[59] Ad haec impedimenta tollenda ponuntur quattuor conditiones praemissae (scilicet, ut petantur pie, et pro se, et perseveranter, et ad salutem), quibus positis semper habet oratio efficaciam impetrandi. Potest ergo impedimentum orationis esse vel ex parte orantis, si orationem inordinate emittat, et quantum ad hoc removendum dicitur, pie, in quo importatur modus latriae, quae alio nomine pietas dicitur . . . (*Ibid.*, q. 4, a. 7, qt. 3).

[60] . . . secundum quod (i. e., secundum modum latriae quae dicitur pietas) oratio modificari debet . . . (*Ibid.*).

[61] Omnes illae conditiones quae requiruntur ex parte orantis inquantum est orans

6. *A summary.* The summit of Saint Thomas' teaching on devotion in the *Sentences* has been reached and it will be useful at this point to recapitulate briefly the conclusions that have been drawn in the course of tracing his doctrine. It has been seen that devotion is interior and from the will; that it is an effect, and indeed the first effect, of the virtue of religion; that it is a material disposition necessary to other acts of religion, eminent among which are prayer and the sacraments; that this material disposition must at times be actualized and that when so actualized, it takes on—although still retaining its essential relationship to religion—a special relationship to certain virtues that are necessary to the more perfect reception of the sacraments, especially the Eucharist; and finally it has been seen that actual devotion is specifically a mode of the virtue of religion and as applied to prayer is a summation of all the virtues and their circumstances that are required on the part of the one praying in the offering of a perfect prayer.

Even here in the Commentary on the *Sentences*, Saint Thomas sees the necessity of unifying the vast quantity of doctrine on devotion that tradition had passed down to him. He sees first of all that devotion must be essentially linked with worship and that any division that puts devotion into two distinct categories must be avoided. Some slight hint of the unification he is to accomplish can be seen in his calling devotion the *first* effect of religion. The influence of Saint Albert is evident in Thomas' doctrine that devotion is a disposition. His own future doctrine is foreshadowed when he speaks of the necessity of actualizing this disposition. And his final effort at unification of the whole traditional teaching on devotion (resulting in a doctrine which he abandons in the *Summa*) is observable in his description of devotion as a mode which includes all the circumstances of virtue necessary to perfect prayer.

## II. SAINT THOMAS' CONCEPT OF DEVOTION IN *THE COMMENTARY ON THE EPISTLES OF SAINT PAUL*, IN *DE MALO*, AND IN *THE COMMENTARY ON DIONYSIUS' "DE DIVINIS NOMINIBUS"*

1. *The Commentary on the Epistles.* In the time intervening between his Commentary on the *Sentences* and his Commentary on the *Epistles of Saint Paul*, Saint Thomas speaks of devotion in his *Expositio super Dionysium, "De Divinis Nominibus."* But since he mentions it only once and that in a context from which little can be gathered, it will be more profitable to leave this passage for later

includuntur in hoc quod dicit, pie, quod includit omnes circumstantias virtutis, quibus ordinatur actus ex parte agentis (*Ibid.*, ad 6um).

treatment and to proceed at once to a consideration of devotion in his Commentary on the *Epistles of Saint Paul.*

Since the *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* was written about ten years later than any other of the epistolary commentaries in which devotion is mentioned, a closer approach to the chronological development of the Angelic Doctor's teaching on devotion will obtain if *Romans* is considered after the other Epistles.

*a*) In explaining the words of Saint Paul in the *First Epistle to the Corinthians* regarding those who eat the bread or drink the chalice of the Lord unworthily being guilty of the body and of the blood of the Lord,[62] Saint Thomas mentions three ways in which the Sacrament of the Eucharist can be received unworthily. The second of these ways concerns the sin of indevotion.

> The second way in which the Eucharist may be received unworthily is that of receiving the Sacrament without devotion. This indevotion may be only venial, as when someone receives the Eucharist while his mind is distracted by secular business, though he retains his habitual devotion to the sacrament. The effect of this sin of indevotion is to impede the fruit of the Sacrament which is spiritual refreshment. It does not make the person guilty of the body and blood of the Lord in the sense in which the Apostle speaks here. But there is a sin of indevotion that is mortal. And he commits it who holds the Sacrament in contempt.[63]

It is clear from these words of Saint Thomas that he is speaking of devotion as a prerequisite disposition to the reception of the Sacrament. He confirms the doctrine of the *Sentences* regarding the result of indevotion in the reception of Baptism. The distinction here between habitual devotion which cannot be absent without mortal sin and actual devotion which may be impeded by venial sin, is very clear.

In the fourteenth chapter of the same Epistle, Saint Paul says (verse 14): "If I pray in a tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is without fruit." Saint Thomas in determining what the fruit of prayer is says that it is twofold: first merit, and secondly spiritual consolation and devotion.[64] Devotion is, there-

[62] XI, 27.

[63] Secundo ex hoc quod aliquis non devota mente accedit ad Eucharistiam: quae quidem indevotio quandoque est veniale: puta cum aliquis distracta mente ad saecularia negotia, accedit ad hoc sacramentum habitualiter retinens debitam reverentiam ad ipsum: et talis indevotio licet impediat fructum hujus sacramenti, qui est spiritualis refectio, non tamen facit reum corporis et sanguinis Domini, sicut hic Apostolus loquitur. Quaedam vero indevotio est peccatum mortale, quae scilicet, est cum contemptu hujus sacramenti (*Super Iam Epist. S. Pauli ad Cor.*, Cap. xi, Lect. 7).

[64] Dicendum est quod duplex est fructus orationis. Unus fructus est meritum

fore, the result of prayer. This is evidently a use of the word in a sense different from any that has thus far been determined. And it will be well at this point to define clearly the connotations which the Angelic Doctor gives to the word devotion. The first sense in which he employed the word was that of a material quality or disposition of the will, a prerequisite to acts of worship, especially prayer and the reception of the sacraments. It has been seen that in speaking of Baptism in the *Commentary on the Sentences* Saint Thomas distinguished the devotion that is required for the valid reception of the sacrament and whose absence in the one being baptized is always a mortal sin, from devotion as it implies the fervor of charity, the lack of which is not always a mortal sin but which is required for the reception of the effect of the sacrament in its fullness and superabundance.[65] He has just made the same distinction in commenting on the eleventh chapter of this Epistle.[66] Hence the devotion which is a prerequisite to prayer is twofold. Here in the commentary on chapter fourteen, he describes a devotion that is, as has been said, an effect or fruit of prayer. It is the consolation or fruit which repairs and restores the spirit.[67] It is important to note that this devotion is a spiritual thing and not a sensible feeling.[68] In a third connotation however, Saint Thomas uses the word devotion to denominate a sensible feeling. It is in this sense that he employed it in speaking of prayer in the *Commentary on the Sentences* when he made the arousing of devotion the reason for public prayer. He says in that place that this sensible devotion is caused by the overflow from the powerful movement of the superior appetite, that is, the will. Hence it is the spiritual devotion resulting from prayer that is the cause of this sensible devotion. And sensible devotion in turn reacts upon prayer itself by way of a disposition, making prayer easy and delightful. Saint Thomas has, then, used devotion in connection with prayer in three senses: as it is a prerequisite to prayer; as it is an effect of prayer; and as it is a sensible feeling caused by the redundance of devotion in the will. It is in the second sense that he uses the word here in the fourteenth chapter of *First Corinthians* and he lays emphasis upon several of its features—that it is born of prayer, that it is something spiritual, and that it recreates and refreshes the

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quod homini provenit; alius fructus est spiritualis consolatio et devotio concepta ex oratione (*Ibid.*, Cap. xiv, Lect. 3).

[65] *Vide* p. 418, *supra*.

[66] *Vide*, p. 428, *supra*.

[67] Id quod dicit Apostolus: Mens est sine fructu, intelligitur de fructu refectionis (*Ibid.*).

[68] Et quantum ad fructum devotionis *spiritualis* privatur qui non attendit ad ea quae orat, seu non intelligit (*Ibid.*).

soul. It is not a necessary effect of prayer. Prayer is meritorious without it.[69] It arises from attention to and understanding of what is said in prayer, although slavish attention even to the sense of the words if the end is forgotten impedes it.[70] From all this it is clear that the Angelic Doctor speaks here of devotion as the spiritual joy (*laetitia, allégresse*) that is caused by prayer and he himself removes all doubt of the fact when he speaks of devotion in this second sense as synonymous with spiritual consolation and refreshment.

*b*) In commenting on the passage where Saint Paul in the *Second Epistle to the Corinthians* exhorts them not to receive the grace of God in vain but to exhibit themselves as the ministers of God,[71] Saint Thomas distinguishes three ways in which this is to be done: in exterior works; by greater devotion; and by shunning the company of infidels.[72] The expression " ministers of God " is to be noted in connection with devotion, for this refers devotion again to the virtue of religion. The use of the phrase, " how this is to be done," indicates that Saint Thomas still considers devotion, to be a quality of the soul which gives its mode to the virtue of religion. He treats in particular all three ways in which the Corinthians are to exhibit themselves as ministers of God and when he comes to the treatment of devotion it is at once apparent that he is speaking of devotion as it is the spiritual joy caused by prayer. " The Apostle instructs the Corinthians in this place," he says, " about the use of the grace they have received with regard to interior devotion which consists in gladness of heart and which causes openness or greatness of heart." [73] It is important here to note that God by his grace is the first cause of devotion. Devotion is a part of the grace which

[69] Et ideo dicendum est quod quando orans aliquando divertit ab his quae dicit, seu quando quis in uno opere meritorio non continue cogitat in quolibet actu, quod facit hoc propter Deum, non perdit rationem meriti (*Ibid.*).

[70] Sed sciendum est quod triplex est attentio. Una est ad verba quae homo dicit, et haec aliquando nocet, inquantum impedit devotionem; alia est ad sensum verborum, et haec nocet, non tamen est multum nociva; tertia est ad finem, et haec est melior et quasi necessaria (*Ibid.*).

[71] vi, 1.

[72] Consequenter cum dicit: " Sed in omnibus exhibeamus," etc., ostendit in speciali quomodo nos debemus exhibere sicut Dei ministros in usu gratiae collatae. Et hoc quantum ad tria. Primo quantum ad exteriorem operationem; secundo quantum ad majorem devotionem; tertio quantum ad infidelium vitationem (*Super IIam Epist. S. Pauli ad Cor.*, Cap. vi, Lect. 1).

[73] Postquam Apostolus docuerat usum gratiae collatae quantum ad bonas operationes exteriores, hic consequenter instruit eos circa usum praedictum quantum ad interiorem devotionem quae consistit in laetitia cordis, quae latitudinis cordis causat (*Ibid.*).

man receives and which Saint Paul warns the Corinthians not to receive in vain. Saint Thomas opposes this openness of heart, which is caused by devotion, to narrowness of heart. He describes the latter as the condition of a heart that limits itself to small things, as the heart does that has no care except for earthly things and contemns the things of heaven because the mind is not strong enough to understand them.[74] Openness of heart, on the other hand, signifies greatness and vehemence in desire and he has it who passes over the sensible as small and unworthy and fixes his desire on heavenly things.[75] Saint Thomas says that the sign of this greatness of heart is to be found in spontaneous speech, for the mouth is immediately connected with the heart. Thus that which is expressed in words is conceived in the heart.[76] It is possible that he has reference here to the sensible devotion which is caused by that devotion that signifies spiritual gladness. He goes on to say that Saint Paul wishes to tell the Corinthians that if they should fall into this narrowness of heart, they should not remain in such a state but should strive earnestly to obtain the greatness of heart which is not the narrowness of legal observance but the freedom of the spirit, which is in the faith of Christ.[77]

Saint Paul devotes chapters eight and nine of *Second Corinthians* to exhorting the Corinthians to be generous in giving alms to the Church at Jerusalem. Throughout the exhortation the Apostle insists on the necessity of promptness in giving, and Saint Thomas in his commentary on these two chapters takes promptness as the central theme of the discourse. Nowhere in his commentary does the Angelic Doctor say expressly that he is speaking of the promptitude of devotion but there are several indirect arguments that make it very probable that the commentary on these two chapters is to be understood as treating of the promptitude of devotion. Here in *Second Corinthians* almsgiving may be understood by the Angelic Doctor to be an effect of the virtue of charity as it certainly

[74] Cor autem aliquando est strictum, tunc, scilicet, quando comprimitur et concluditur in modico, sicut cum quis non curat nisi de terrenis, et contemnit caelestia, non valens ea intellectu capere (*Ibid.*).

[75] Aliquando autem est latum, tunc scilicet, quando quis magna appetit et desiderat, et talis erat Apostolus, qui non reputans ea quae videntur, desiderabat calestia (*Ibid.*).

[76] Signum autem laetitudinis est os latum, quia os immediate adhaeret cordi. Unde quae per os exprimimus sunt expressa signa conceptionum cordis (*Ibid.*).

[77] Si aliquando decepti a pseudoangustiati estis, non omnino remaneatis in angustiatione; imo studeatis habere latum cor . . . habeatis cor magnum et liberum libertate spiritus, quae est in fide Christi, et non coangustiamini in servitute observantiae legalis (*Ibid.*).

is considered by him in the *Summa*.[78] But it is to be noted that in the *Sentences*, mercy, which is the virtue from which almsgiving properly proceeds, is a potential part of justice and not as in the *Summa* an effect of charity.[79] It is impossible to say whether in the *Commentary on Second Corinthians*, written after the *Sentences* but before the *Summa*, Saint Thomas still referred almsgiving to justice rather than to charity or whether he had already changed his opinion.

In support, however, of the opinion that Saint Thomas is here referring promptitude to devotion, a strong argument can be drawn from the closing verses of the ninth chapter. Father E. B. Allo, O.P., has thus expressed this argument:

> The word '*λειτουργια*' ('administration,' of Chapter nine, verse twelve) signified 'public service' in the Greek cities. Profane in its first use, it was afterward occasionally used by the Jews as also by the Greeks in a religious sense of 'sacred service.' Paul uses it here to describe the collection which is an act of communion between the churches, the body of Christ, and a service rendered not only to the poor but also to God. He associates the same word elsewhere with the idea of sacrifice.[80] He employs it as the name of the servants in speaking of the service of God or of Christ. . . .[81] That the word '*λειτουργια*' is used in its connection with the virtue of religion in this passage is beyond all doubt. Cornelius à Lapide and others compare the sacrifice of temporal goods made in honor of God to the sacrifice of the Mass—the supreme act of Liturgy.[82]

Of Chapter nine verse eleven, Father Allo says: "The richness which Paul envisages here is the faculty to devote one's self to others without obstacle. It is the ardor to help others in all sim-

[78] II-II, q. 32, a. 1, c.

[79] Sed misericordia conjectat in dationibus aliquod speciale bonum, quod est relevatio miseriae aliorum: unde eleemosyna est actus misericordiae et per consequens liberalitatis. . . . Subvenire miseris non est actus justitiae ratione sui sed ratione suae partis secundum quod liberalitas etiam ad justitiam reducitur sicut pars (*IV Sent.*, d. XV, q. 2, a. 7, qt. 3 and ad 4um).

[80] *Phil.* ii, 17. [81] *Heb.* i, 14.

[82] "Le substantif '*λειτουργια*' signifait 'service public' dans les cités grecques: d'abord profane, il a pris occasionnellement, chez les Juifs (Cf. *Luc.* i, 23; *Heb.* viii, 6; ix, 21) et dans l'hellenisme, le sens religieux de 'service sacre. . . .' Paul se l'approprie pour designer cette collecte, qui est un acte de solidarité des eglises, corps du Christ, et un service fait non seulement pour les pauvres, mais pour Dieu; il associe ailleurs le même mot à l'idée de sacrifice (*Phil.* ii, 17); il emploie le nom d'agent en parlant du service de Dieu ou du Christ (*Heb.* i, 14) . . . mais le sens religieux de '*λειτουργια*' dans notre passage est hors de doute. Corn. a Lap., avec autres comparait même ce sacrifice de biens temporels, fait en l'honneur de Dieu, au grand sacrifice de la messe, suprème 'liturgie'" (*Études Bibliques. Saint Paul, Secunde Epitre aux Corinth.*, p. 236).

plicity that exalts the thanksgivings rendered to God by Paul and all the Christians." [83]

It seems to be quite evident from this that in these two chapters almsgiving, proceeding from charity, is imperated by the virtue of religion and ordained to the worship of God by way of a sacrifice. Hence the conclusion that the promptitude of which Saint Paul and Saint Thomas speak refers to devotion seems to have considerable foundation. Saint Thomas himself points out the readiness of the virtue of religion to imperate mercy in this act of giving alms.

There is nothing to prohibit an act which is elicited by one virtue being imperated and ordained to the end of another. And in this manner almsgiving is spoken of as a work of satisfaction insofar as it is intended to be a satisfaction for sin. Or it may be intended as an act of sacrifice and then it is imperated by the virtue of religion.[84]

From the context, too, in several places in which Saint Thomas speaks of promptitude, it seems justifiable to assume that he is speaking of the promptitude of devotion. This will be seen as the individual places are treated.

The Angelic Doctor first explains what Saint Paul understands by promptitude in giving.

This promptitude can come from two things—an abundance of riches, or a contempt for riches. And thus he who has contempt for riches can do the same thing in his poverty as he who is rich can do in his abundance. For this contempt for riches comes from a heart that is wholly given to God.[85]

This giving of the whole heart to God promptly and spontaneously is the work of devotion. He says again of these two causes of promptness of soul that they are like two faculties or virtues: one

[83] . . . la richesse qu'il fait entrevoir en fin de compte, c'est la faculté de se dévouer aux autres sans obstacle, l'ardeur à les secourir en toute simplicité, ce qui exaltera les actions de grâces rendues à Dieu par Paul et par tous les Chrétiens (*Ibid.*).

[84] Nihil prohibet actum qui est proprie unius virtutis elicitive, attribui alteri virtuti sicut imperanti et ordinanti ad suum finem; et hoc modo dare eleemosynam ponitur inter opera satisfactoria, in quantum miseratio defectuum patientis ordinatur ad satisfaciendum pro culpa; secundum autem quod ordinatur ad placandum Deum habet rationem sacrificii; et sic imperatur a latria (*Summa Theol.*, II-II, q. 32, a. 1, ad 2um).

[85] Ubi sciendum est, quod homo ex duabus causis habet promptum animum ad dandum satis, scilicet, ex abundantia divitiarum, sicut divites, vel ex contemptu divitiarum; et sic idem facit in paupere contemptus, quod facit in divite abundantia; quia cor eorum erat solum ad Deum, et ex hoc provenit contemptus divitiarum (*Super IIam Epist. S. Pauli ad Cor.*, Cap. viii, Lect. 1).

interior—the promptitude of the soul to give; the other exterior—the riches themselves.[86] It will be remembered how in the *Commentary on the Sentences*, the offering of the poor widow was actually greater than that of others because of her devotion in giving.[87]

Saint Thomas places emphasis on a prompt *will* in giving.[88] And this is properly the work of devotion—to make the will itself prompt in the service of God. He connects this promptitude with piety in interpreting the words of Saint Paul concerning the profit the Corinthians can derive from almsgiving.[89]

> A good work proceeding from piety is more useful to the one that does it than to the one who receives it, for the former has a spiritual good, the latter only a temporal one. And just as the spiritual is to be preferred to the temporal so in the works of piety, giving is to be preferred to receiving.[90]

The intimate relation that Saint Thomas understood between piety and devotion has already been seen in the *Commentary on the Sentences*.[91]

The Angelic Doctor goes on to say that the Apostle almost goes so far as to tell the Corinthians that it is more important to will than to do and this is the Apostle's reason for repeated insistence on promptitude of will.[92] An interesting confirmation of the conclusion that almsgiving is here imperated by the virtue of religion, comes from Father Allo's Commentary on the twelfth verse of chapter eight: "The word 'εὐπρόσδεκτος' ('accepted') is specially used of sacrifice in classical language."[93] It is to be noted that this word "accepted" is used in connection with promptitude in verse twelve.

[86] Vel dicendum est et melius, quod est virtus interior animi, et virtus exterior, scilicet facultas rerum temporalium. Virtus interior est promptitudo animi ad dandum . . . quod fuerunt voluntarii ad dandum secundum virtutem animi interiorem, et supra virtutem exteriorem, scilicet, divitiarum (*Ibid.*).

[87] *Vide* p. 414, *supra.*

[88] Quam promptam voluntatem habeatis ad dandum . . . (*Super IIam Epist. S. Pauli ad Cor.*, Cap. viii, Lect. 1).

[89] viii, 10.

[90] Bonum enim pietatis plus est utile facienti, quam illi cui fit; quia faciens reportat inde commodum spirituale; recipiens vero temporale, et sicut spirituale praeferri debet temporali, sic in operibus pietatis utilitas dantis praefertur utilitati accipientis (*Ibid.*, Lect. II).

[91] *Vide* p. 415, *supra.*

[92] Quasi dicat: plus est velle quam facere. Et ideo debitis esse prompti ad dandum (*Super IIam Epist. S. Pauli ad Cor.*, Cap. viii, Lect. 1).

[93] 'εὐπρόσδεκτος' . . . dit specialment des sacrifices, en langue classique (*Op. cit.*, p. 220).

It is precisely the promptitude of the will that makes the gift acceptable.

Saint Thomas points out that the reason for Paul's boasting about the Corinthians is their promptitude of heart.[94] He says that the Apostle determines three things to be necessary with regard to the mode of giving—promptitude, abundance, and joy.[95] Both promptitude and joy are necessary to remove any violence so that the almsgiving may be perfectly voluntary.[96] And it is worthy of note that the Angelic Doctor refers for confirmation of his doctrine to the *Fifty-third Psalm*, verse eight which reads: "I will freely sacrifice to thee, and will give praise, O God, to thy name. . . ." This is certainly a clear indication that Saint Thomas refers this almsgiving to the virtue of religion.

> Two things are necessary for an act of virtue: first, the act itself must be good, and secondly the manner in which the act is performed must be good. For although among men only the external act is seen, God sees both the external act and the internal mode. Hence an act of virtue must be done with sweetness and joy.[97]

Note again that in seeking confirmation of this doctrine, Saint Thomas refers to a passage of Sacred Scripture that is spoken unquestionably of the virtue of religion: "Serve ye the Lord with gladness."[98] Of importance, too, in this ninth chapter is the frequent linking of promptitude and joy. Spiritual joy, it will be remembered, is a second meaning which Saint Thomas attached to devotion. It may be said that the promptitude of which Saint Thomas speaks here is devotion in the first meaning which he

[94] Quod autem sit promptus animus vester, probo ex duobus. Primo ex gloriatione nostra de vobis. Nam nisi scirem vos esse promptos ad hoc, non fuissem gloriatus de vobis apud alios (*Super IIam Epist. S. Pauli ad Cor.*, Cap. ix, Lect. 1).

[95] Secundo hortatur eos ad debitum modum dandi. Et primo hortantur, ut dent prompte; secundo, ut dent abundanter; tertio, ut dent hilariter (*Ibid.*).

[96] Est autem duplex violentum, simplex et mixtum . . . ad removendum ergo illud (simplicem) violentum dicit: . . . non cogat vos ad dandum mandatum nostrum sed moveat vos ad hoc prompta voluntas vestra. . . . Ut ergo hoc mixtum violentum removeat dixit . . . non ex timore confusionis, ne scilicet, erubescatis, sed ex gaudio quod concepistis propter amorem quem habetis ad sanctos (*Ibid.*).

[97] In actibus autem virtutum duo sunt, scilicet, species actus, et modus agendi qui est ex parte agentis. Unde nisi in actu virtutis utrumque istorum concurrat, non dicitur actus ille simpliciter virtuosus . . . nisi delectabiliter et cum gaudio operetur. Et licet quod homines qui non vident nisi ea quae patent, sufficiat quod quis operetur actum virtutis secundum ipsam speciem actus, puta actum justitiae; tamen apud Deum, qui intuetur cor, non sufficiat quod solum operetur actum virtutis secundum speciem, nisi etiam secundum debitum modum operetur, scilicet, delectabiliter et cum gaudio (*Ibid.*).

[98] Ps. xc, 1.

attached to it—a quality of the soul and a necessary predisposition to acts of religion. And this promptitude is the cause of spiritual joy. For it is the disposition or devotion in its first meaning, in prayer, that enables prayer to cause the spiritual joy of which Saint Thomas speaks in *First Corinthians*.[99]

Saint Thomas' commentary on the closing verses of chapter nine affords a final argument for referring the promptitude of which he has been speaking to devotion, for in this commentary he refers the whole theme of chapter eight and nine to the virtue of religion. "The reason," he says, "why the Corinthians are to give alms promptly, abundantly, and joyfully is that they themselves may be enriched . . . and that their gifts may be an act of thanksgiving to God."[100] These words would seem to remove all doubt as to the reordination of the act of almsgiving in these two chapters to the virtue of religion.

*c*) In his commentary on the *Epistle to the Galatians*, Saint Thomas explains the words of Saint Paul regarding those who are Christ's having crucified their flesh.[101] "They subdue their flesh," he says, "by vigils, by fasts, and by labors, because of the devotion they have to Christ crucified. By afflicting their flesh they conform themselves to Christ crucified."[102] This is the second occasion upon which Saint Thomas has emphasized devotion to Christ crucified as being the motive for these acts of religion.[103] And this is not to be wondered at. For they are acts pertaining to sacrifice and must be in conformity with the great act of sacrifice performed by Christ upon the cross. The fact that every act of religion must partake of the qualities of the great act of worship that was Christ's is of immense importance to the appreciation of the place of devotion in the spiritual life and more about it will be seen when the doctrine of the *Summa* is treated.

*d*) In the prologue of his commentary on the *Epistle to the*

[99] *Vide* p. 428, *supra*.

[100] Deinde assignat rationem, quare prompte, abundanter, et hilariter dare debeant, ex parte ipsorum dantium; hic assignat rationem ex parte ipsius Dei pro quo dare debent. . . . In ratione autem assignata tria considerantur, quorum primum est ipsorum locupletatio. . . . Sed et hoc ipsum ad alium finem referendum est, scilicet, ad Deum. Et ideo subdit: largitio simplex operatur mediantibus nos gratiarum actionem Deo (*Ibid.*, Lect. 2).

[101] v, 24.

[102] Quia vero caro domatur per vigilias, jejunia et labores; ad haec autem opera moventur ex devotione quam habent ad Christum crucifixum: Christo crucifixo se conformaverunt, affligendo carnem suam (*Super Epist. S. Pauli ad Gal.*, Cap. v, Lect. 7)

[103] *Vide* p. 424, *supra*.

*Ephesians*, the Angelic Doctor, in explaining why faith is aptly compared to a pillar of cloud, says that faith has obscurity since it concerns things that are not evident; it is dissoluble because it will one day vanish; is has moisture because it excites to devotion.[104] It has been seen how, in the *Commentary on the Sentences*, Saint Thomas compared the effect of the reception of the Eucharist upon the soul to the effect upon the body of taking food.[105] He indicates in that place that the Eucharist counteracts the action of concupiscence drying up devotion. To be noted again is the close connection between faith and devotion.

*e*) In his commentary on the *Epistle to the Philippians*, Saint Thomas speaks of devotion to Christ.[106] Then for the first time he speaks of devotion to creatures, saying that the Apostle first commends Timothy to the Philippians for his charity toward them and then for his devotion to the Apostle himself and his veneration of him.[107] Here Saint Thomas points out by inference what it was that made Christ the perfect mediator between God and men—His perfect charity toward men, and His perfect devotion in the worship of His heavenly Father. The Angelic Doctor is very clear on devotion paid to creatures when he treats devotion in the *Summa* and this point will recur there.

*f*) The commentary of Saint Thomas on the first chapter of the *Epistle to the Colossians* reaffirms the doctrine of the *Sentences* on the necessity of devotion in prayer.

> Prayer ought to proceed in such a way that the person who asks devoutly be heard, just as those seeking favors first use persuasion in order to influence; but devotion and meditation on God and the things of God should precede petitions made to God, not in order to change Him but that man may be lifted up to Him.[108]

Devotion and meditation are here compared to persuasions pre-

[104] Fides ostendit rectam viam veniendi ad patriam. Unde significatur per columnam nubis. Fides enim ad modum nubis habet obscuritatem, quia cum aenigmate; dissolutionem, quia evacuatur; humiditatem, quia excitat ad devotionem (*Super Epist. S. Pauli ad Ephes.*, Prolog.).

[105] *Vide* p. 424, *supra*.

[106] ex devotione ad ipsum Christum (*Super Epist. S. Pauli ad Phil.*, Cap. ii, Lect. 1).

[107] Deinde commendat eum, et primo ex charitate ad eos; secundo ex devotione ad Apostolum. Et sic facit bonus mediator, quia illos diligit, hunc veneratur (*Ibid.*, Lect. 4).

[108] Oratio est ascensus mentis in Deum. Postulatio est rerum petitio. Oratio debet praecedere ut devote petens exaudiatur, sicut petentes praemittunt persuasionem ut inclinent; sed nos debemus praemittere devotionem et meditationem Dei et divinorum, non ut eum flectamus, sed ut nos erigamus in eum (*Super Epist. S. Pauli ad Colos.*, Cap. i, Lect. 3).

fixed to a petition. This clearly indicates that Saint Thomas still considers devotion to be a quality of the soul acting as a moral cause in obtaining an answer from God to the prayers of man. The reason for this linking of devotion and meditation becomes clear in the *Summa* where Saint Thomas treats of their relation in a special article.

*g*) Saint Paul in beginning his *First Epistle to the Thessalonians* commends the manner in which they have received the doctrine he has preached to them.[109] And Saint Thomas observes that it is the devotion and promptness in the Thessalonians' manner of receiving his doctrine that the Apostle wishes to commend.[110] He joins expressly for the first time the two words, devotion and promptitude. But it seems impossible to say from this place whether he understands them as synonyms for the same quality or as expressive of two different qualities.

*h*) In the *Second Epistle to the Thessalonians* Saint Paul gives thanks for the Thessalonians "because their faith groweth exceedingly and their charity aboundeth."[111] Saint Thomas says that among the gifts of God, faith by which God dwells in man is first. By faith the mind of man is perfected. By faith Christ dwells in his heart. By faith then man is perfected through knowledge, devotion, and inherence in God.[112] Devotion therefore is the result of the indwelling of Christ in the heart. Once again devotion is placed in close association with faith—faith in contradistinction to charity. For the Angelic Doctor then mentions charity as the second of the gifts of God.[113]

*i*) In commenting on Saint Paul's doctrine on prayer as contained in the *First Epistle to Timothy*, Saint Thomas again insists on the connection between prayer and devotion. He interprets the words of Saint Paul: "I will, therefore, that men pray . . . lifting up pure hands,"[114] as meaning that the Apostle wishes men to pray with devotion of heart.[115]

[109] i, 5.

[110] Deinde in speciali commemorat eorum bona, quos primo commendat quod devote et prompte susceperunt praedicationem non obstante tribulatione (*Super Iam Epist. S. Pauli ad Thessal.*, Cap. i, Lect. 1).

[111] i, 3.

[112] In his donis autem Dei, primum est fides, per quam Deus habitat in nobis, et in hac proficimus secundum intellectum. Et sic proficit homo per cognitionem, devotionem, et inhaesionem. 'Habitare Christum per fidem in cordibus nostris' (*Eph.* iii) (*Super IIam Epist. S. Pauli ad Thessal.*, Cap. i, Lect. 1).

[113] Secundum est charitas, per quam Deus est in nobis secundum effectum (*Ibid.*).

[114] ii, 8.

[115] "Levantes," etc., i. e., orantes cum devotione cordis (*Super Iam Epist. S. Pauli ad Tim.*, Cap. ii, Lect. 2).

The Angelic Doctor speaks of promptitude in the worship of God in commenting on the words of Saint Paul in the same Epistle regarding piety:

'Exercise thyself unto godliness.'[116] These words can be understood as pertaining to the worship of God. And note well that the Apostle says: 'Exercise thyself unto godliness'; and does not merely say: 'do that which is unto godliness.' For exercise includes the notion of promptitude and this is because exercise makes for ease, enjoyment, and stability.[117]

The Angelic Doctor seems to speak here of the promptitude of devotion—the promptitude that causes ease, joy, and stability in the worship of God. This passage lends a great deal of independent support to the interpretation that has been given to chapters eight and nine of *Second Corinthians* and when the two passages are taken in conjunction there seems to be little room left for doubt about the fact that devotion as a prerequisite to acts of religion, consists, at least principally, in promptitude of will. And this devotion is the cause, as Saint Thomas says here, of the devotion that is a spiritual joy.

*j*) In his commentary on the *Epistle to the Hebrews*, regarding Saint Paul's words that a high priest must be one who can have compassion on them that are ignorant and that err,[118] Saint Thomas says that while a priest must be concerned with those things that pertain to the worship of God, he must, nevertheless, be a mediator between God and man. Therefore just as through devotion in prayer he ought to approach to God as one extreme, so through mercy and compassion he ought to approach to man, who is the other extreme.[119] This is a reference to the two qualities required in one who is a mediator, spoken of in the *Epistle to the Philippians*. The importance ascribed by the Angelic Doctor to the work of devotion is noteworthy. It puts man in contact with God. Important, too, is the connection between devotion and the virtue of mercy—the idea of service to others. This will be seen in considering the doctrine of the *Summa*.

[116] iv, 7.

[117] Cum ergo dicit 'exerce teipsum ad pietatem,' potest accipi secundum quod pertinet ad cultum Dei, et ad opera misericordiae exhibenda. . . . Et dicit 'Exerce,' non 'fac,' quia exercitium dicit promptitudinem; et hoc ideo, quia exercitatus facit levius, delectabilius, et stabilius (*Ibid.*, Cap. iv, Lect. 2).

[118] v, 2.

[119] Dicit ergo: dico quod debet esse in his, quae sunt ad Deum, tamen debet esse medius inter hominem et Deum. Sicut ergo per devotionem orationis debet tangere Deum tamquam unum extremum, sic per misericordiam et compassionem debet tangere alterum extremum, scilicet, hominem (*Super Epist. S. Pauli ad Heb.*, Cap. v, Lect. 1).

*k*) In the commentary on the *Epistle to the Romans*, the writing of which, it is to be noted, was for all practical purposes coincident with the composition of that part of the *Summa* in which devotion is treated, Saint Thomas speaks of devotion in the first chapter. Saint Paul writes of his readiness to preach the gospel to the Romans, giving as his reason that he is not ashamed of the gospel.[120] The Angelic Doctor sees the Apostle of the Gentiles speaking here of the promptitude of devotion, and he confirms his conclusion by the words of *Exodus*, "And all the multitude . . . offered first fruits to the Lord with a most ready and devout mind."[121] Saint Thomas further says that the impediment to promptitude is shame, on account of which many leave undone things which otherwise they would do with promptness. And he connects devotion again with Baptism by showing that it is to prevent shame for the gospel that the forehead is anointed in the form of a cross in the administration of the sacrament of Baptism. "For," he says, "the forehead is the seat of shame."[122] It is to be noted here that the use of the words promptitude and devotion corresponds exactly to their use in other passages in the commentaries on the Epistles. And since, as has been said, this commentary on *Romans* and the Secunda Secundae of the *Summa* were written practically at the same time, it may be safely assumed that devotion in its first meaning was used throughout the commentary on the Epistles as synonymous with promptitude. Thus it follows that wherever Saint Thomas has spoken of promptitude in connection with the virtue of religion, as is the case in chapters eight and nine of *Second Corinthians*, he has been speaking of devotion.

*l*) In the Commentary on the Epistles all the doctrine of the *Sentences* has been reaffirmed and several new points added. Three significations of the word devotion have been clearly distinguished. Devotion in its first meaning still remains a quality or disposition of the soul—a disposition which the doctrine in the commentary on the Epistles seems, with more exactitude than the *Sentences*, to identify, at least in its principal signification, with the notion of promptitude in the worship of God.

[120] i, 15, 16.

[121] Ex utraque autem causa concludit promptitudinem voluntatis . . . 'Egressaque omnis multitudo . . . obtulit mente promptissima atque devota' (*Exod.*, xxxv) (*Super Epist. S. Pauli ad Roman.*, Cap. i, Lect. 5).

[122] Et excludit impedimentum promptitudinis, scilicet, erubescentiam, propter quam multi ea praetermittunt, quae alias facerent prompte . . . , et inde est quod baptizati liniuntur chrismate in fronte signo crucis, ubi est sedes verecundiae, ne scilicet evangelium erubescant (*Ibid.*).

2. *In De Malo.* Saint Thomas, in his work *De Malo*, speaks of the sin of indevotion. He is answering an objection to his conclusion that sadness concerning the things of God, precisely because they are the things of God, is a sin. The objection arises from Saint Gregory's statement that this sadness is an internal sorrow of the mind by which a person prays less devoutly. The objection goes on to say that it is not within the power of man to control the devotion of his prayers and hence it is not within his power to prevent this sadness about things divine.[123] The Angelic Doctor in his answer says that it is quite true that devotion is from God and therefore is not directly attributable to the actions of man as to a first cause. But man is responsible for its presence or absence insofar as he can dispose himself to devotion or can impede it. And in this sense indevotion is a sin.[124] This amounts to saying that lack of devotion is not a sin in itself but that it can be a sign or indication of sin insofar as it is a privation resulting from sin. From this it is evident that Saint Thomas is not speaking of devotion as it is a necessary predisposition to acts of religion. The absence of devotion in this sense is always a sin, either mortal or venial depending upon which of two possible meanings the word "disposition" has.[125] For this devotion, as was seen in the commentaries on the Epistles, is the promptitude of the will in the service of God. Saint Thomas must then be speaking of devotion in the other two senses that have been distinguished—a spiritual joy caused by prayers, and the overflowing of this spiritual joy into sensible feeling. He has already indicated in the *Commentary on the Sentences* that devotion as a spiritual joy is not wholly within the power of man to produce at will.[126] And this is certainly also true of devotion as it is a joy that is sensibly felt.

This sadness about divine things in the measure that they are divine is not in itself indevotion but is rather caused by indevotion.[127] That is to say that from the lack of spiritual joy caused by sin, this sadness concerning divine things because they are divine arises. The spiritual joy which Saint Thomas calls devotion is to be

[123] Gregorius dicit (*XI Moral.*), quod acedia est interna mentis tristitia, per quam quis minus devote orat aut psallit. Sed non est in potestate hominis quod devote orat. Ergo non est in potestate hominis quod acediam vitet (*Q. D. De Malo*, q. 11, a. 1, Objec. 7).

[124] Dicendum, quod devotio hominis est a Deo; sed secundum quod homo potest se disponere ad devotionem habendam, vel etiam devotionem impedire, secundum hoc indevotio est peccatum (*Ibid.*, ad 7um).

[125] *Vide* p. 429, *supra*. [126] Cf. p. 425, *supra*.

[127] Licet in auctoritate inducta non dicatur quod acedia sit indevotio, sed quod ex ea procedat (*Ibid.*).

carefully distinguished from the joy that results from charity. For the joy of charity is directly opposed to this sadness concerning divine things precisely because they are divine. The joy of charity is never absent from the soul that has charity and charity can be lost only through sin. The spiritual joy that is devotion, however, can be and often is absent from the soul that possesses charity. They differ also in this that while the joy of charity is quiet and constant, devotion as it is a spiritual joy has the connotation of exuberance and gayety and, as has been said, is not constant.

To be especially noted here is the conclusion of Saint Thomas that God is the first cause and the only adequate cause of devotion as it is a spiritual joy. Important, too, is the statement that sadness concerning divine things precisely in the measure that they are divine—one of the most fearful of the capital vices both in its own malice and in the sins which spring from it—arises from indevotion. This is an indication of the important place devotion must hold in any consideration of perfection in the spiritual life.

3. *Super Dionysium "De Divinis Nominibus."* Saint Thomas mentions devotion in an Opusculum written about three years after the completion of the *Commentary on the Sentences*. Dionysius in his work, *De Divinis Nominibus*, treats of God first of all as He is called "Good." "For this name," Dionysius says, "denotes the whole benevolence of divine Providence from its gifts."[128]

To understand the Trinity under this name it is necessary that man approach close to the Trinity by prayer, for the closer he is to the principle of good, the better he will be able to understand it. But when man invokes the Trinity by most pure prayers, by a mind filled with revealed truth and by fitting himself for union with the divine, then he has approached close to the Trinity.[129]

Saint Thomas in his *Explicatio* of this work of Dionysius says that three things are necessary for prayer in order that it bring man close to the Trinity. First it is necessary that man be cleansed of all carnal and worldly affections; secondly, that his intellect be not obscured by the cloudiness of imagination; and finally, that his will

[128] Et primam, si videtur, perfectam, et totarum Dei processionum manifestativam, boni nominationem inspiciemus, boni principem et superbonam invocantes Trinitatem, quae est manifestativa totarum providentiarum benigne ab ipsa donatarum (Cap. iii, Lect. 1).

[129] Oportet enim nos orationibus primum ad ipsam sicut boni principem produci, et magis ipsi propinquantes, in hoc doceri optima bona circa ipsam collocata. Cum autem ipsam invocamus castissimis quidem orationibus et revelata mente, et ad divinam unitionem aptitudine, tunc et nos ipsi adsumus (*Ibid.*).

be directed to God by charity and devotion.[130] The first two conditions are negative and in the third Saint Thomas names the two positive qualities necessary for union with God. To be noted here is the fact that the Angelic Doctor speaks of devotion where Dionysius speaks of the name of God as He is the author of all that man receives, as He is, therefore, the object of man's indebtedness, and it is thus that God is the object of the virtue of religion. Devotion is here the positive quality which prayer must have, in order that it be effective in uniting man with God. Prayer, it will be remembered, is an ascent of the mind to God,[131] and it is the devotion in prayer that makes this ascent of the mind efficacious in uniting man with God.

4. *A summary.* The Angelic Doctor proposes in his Commentary on Saint Paul's Epistles, another problem regarding devotion which he is to solve in his *Summa*. He has made a triple division of devotion and the result does not find favor with him. Devotion must be some one thing and that thing must include all the elements that seem to make a division necessary. In this Commentary, too, Thomas' concept of devotion begins to be more clearly identified with promptitude in worship, a connotation, it will be remembered, which originated with Saint Ambrose. In *De Malo* Saint Thomas takes up the question of the cause of devotion. His predecessors have assigned many causes of devotion. Some named God as cause; others, meditation, prayer, and compunction. Still others mentioned all of these without determining precisely their order and relation one to another. In *De Malo* the Angelic Doctor is not as clear on this point as he is in the *Summa* but he does insinuate the basis for the solution. In the Commentary on Dionysius' *De Divinis Nominibus*, Saint Thomas declares that union with God is brought about by man's ordination to God through charity and devotion. This point he explains more fully in the *Summa*.

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*(To be continued)*

[130] Sed ad hoc quod oratio nos faciat ei propinquos, tria requiruntur. Primo, quod sensualitas sit munda ab omnibus carnalibus et mundanis affectionibus. . . . Secundo ut intellectus noster non obumbretur caligine phantasmatum. . . . Tertio, ut voluntas nostra per charitatem et devotionem sit ordinata in Deum . . . (*Explicatio super Dionysium, De Divinis Nominibus*, Cap. iii, Lect. 1).

[131] Cf. footnote 108.

# BOOK REVIEWS

*How to Read a Book.* By Mortimer J. Adler. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1940. Pp. 398, with index. $2.50.

For his readers in academic circles the author requires no introduction. But his present work represents so radical a departure from the the Adler of *Art and Prudence, What Man Has Made of Man,* and *Problems for Thomists* that the only characteristics which *How to Read a Book* shares with Dr. Adler's previous works are the irrepressible enthusiasm of the author and a careful but not painfully logical structure. When the author says in the opening paragraph, " This is a book for readers who cannot read," he expresses the minimum value of his work. *How to Read a Book* is not a fair title, for the canons of reading rightly are only a part of this work. The art of reading, of course, cannot be taught; like any other habit the art of reading must be cultivated. But the system employed by most of those possessing the skill can be found in a meaty series of chapters sandwiched between a peppery assault on the contemporary school system and a well done bit on the reading of fiction and the value of great works.

The subtitle of the book, " The Art of Getting a Liberal Education," expresses with more clarity the author's purpose in writing. For those desirous of learning to read, the author has provided a technique the nature and function of which will be discussed at length in the course of this review. For those who seek enjoyment that is intellectual in nature and academic in purpose Dr. Adler has proposed a method of reading with which they can, if they wish, take dialectical issue.

In the first part Dr. Adler justifies the need of a book that will enable people to educate themselves by citing proofs that American schools have bungled their assignment. Each year several thousands of students are graduated bachelors quite incapable of reading—not of reading for information (for some elementary skill in reading and remembering is required for passing baccalureate examinations)—but of reading with intelligent comprehension. For reading in the most exact sense of the term implies reading for information and something more—an awareness and comprehension of the significance of the contents of a book, the very essence of intelligent reading.

An examination of most undergraduate classes will reveal the awful inefficiency of our educative process. A survey of the alumni of our schools indicates that most of them cannot read outside their own little field. This is perhaps true because of the standards which have been adopted by the school system. In order to understand whether education has really failed, it is necessary to understand what the aim of education is; then is it possible to judge whether the method employed is really conducive to the attainment of the end and whether, in fact, the end really has been attained.

A person merely well-informed in politics and economic geography does not thereby become an educated man; education does not consist of information. Neither does a man become educated by acquiring the minimum of social virtues. And it would be still more absurd to suppose that the absorption of cultural atmosphere is the educational ideal, for the alumni of this product are not only uneducated but illiterate. It is Dr. Adler's argument that the American schools have failed.

Much consideration could be given to what education is not, but the question always remains, what is it? To be education it should consider the highest faculties of man, the perfection of these faculties, as well as the nature and supernatural end of the individual possessing them. The highest faculties, intellect and will, find their perfection in good habits, the intellectual and the moral virtues. Any system which ignores the development of the higher faculties deserves only the name training, not education.

Overemphasis of the intellectual virtues of knowledge and science in an educational system at the expense of the moral virtues produces parrots, specialists, semi-literate intellectuals; but a system which exaggerates the importance of the conative rather than the cognitive faculties to such an extent that the latter are practically excluded, might, if it succeeds at all, produce good men but never educated men. Each of the systems aiming at the correction of some misconception of man's nature and function resembles a physician desperately trying to cure his patient of some foul disease by injecting a serum—with the result that the patient is always suffering the effects of vaccine and never really enjoying radiant health.

Dr. Adler has indicated that the effects of modern education reveal that something is wrong either with the subject or the agent. Since it is irrational to assume that the students of today are more impervious to intellectual niceties than their fathers a few decades ago, Adler concludes that the defect lies in the educational system iself. By implication at least he seems unwilling to concur in the opinion that democracy had outdone itself in admitting too many to the colleges (p. 30: "Almost all of the great books in every field are within the grasp of all normally intelligent men"). But he asserts that those who are really capable of intellectual effort come to college hopelessly ill-prepared for their venture. They have progressed little in learning to read since they left the sixth grade. He concludes that some defect in the system is responsible for the sorry lack of progress.

The intellectual act can be judged by its product, thought. But since thought is private rather than public it becomes necessary to judge the extent and profundity of thought by certain thought-concomitants: effective reading and writing. And Dr. Adler notes with dismay that these thought-concomitants are almost totally lacking in alumni groups, whose members are discouragingly illiterate and inarticulate. If education intended to produce free men and free minds by removing the obstacles to thought and

providing a method for attaining the end, it has failed. The solution, as Dr. Adler sees it, must propose a system for teaching the mechanics of thought (logic), the mechanics of writing (grammar), and the application of the former to the latter in the production of the finished written-and-thought product (rhetoric).

A good positive program, however, will include morsels of information for the exercise of memory; a generous helping of method for the purpose of assisting the student in understanding the process of arriving at conclusions and augmenting the apperceptive mass; special techniques in calculations; the stimulation of interest in the extra-mental world by showing the relation of things with one another in the physical and social sciences; and a positive system for enabling the student to discover for himself new principles, new theories, and new facts of lesser or greater significance. *How to Read a Book* concerns itself primarily with the last part of the positive program.

A satisfactory solution of the problem involves necessarily a recognition of the end-in-view and the adaptation of means conducive to that end. As previously stated, the end is minds which are free for speculative and creative thought and for practical judgment. The theoretical deals with abstractions, generalities, principles of thought and being, and lends itself readily as an instrument for the rational interpretation of reality. Since there can be no practice without theory, the omission, whether deliberate or unconscious, of the speculative and theoretical from the curriculum is a serious oversight.

If the individual is perfected by the perfection of his faculties, then the facile operation of intellect and will is indeed the objective of any true system of education; for if it true that man is man not by reason of the *rationes* which he possesses in common with the brutes, but those which distinguish him from them, by perfecting his highest faculties his whole being is most perfected. Consequently a system which advocates exercise of the intellect is more perfect than one which advocates either a development of memory (a sensory faculty), or a mechanical skill (which can be simulated by a robot).

Having clarified his position on the subject of education and justified his claim that modern education has failed, Dr. Adler proposes a method of reading, which when applied to the great works of literature, will produce the results of a good liberal education in spite of its ascholastic and therefore vicarious acquisition. His book is no primer for the unschooled, but a serious, yet pleasant handbook for the functional *illiterati* incapable of intelligent reading. It offers no academic short-cut for acquiring skill in this highly specialized intellectual operation. Reading, although involving a mechanical process, measures its success not in speed, but in individual effectiveness, not in quantitative accumulation of information, but in enlightenment.

The work, confined largely to the theory and practice of reading, is a practical work which has avoided mere mechanical efficiency on the one hand, and the psychology of the reading process on the other. The author in asking why the public spends its time in pursuits less intellectual than reading finds his answer in the inability of the reading public to enjoy performing a difficult operation badly.

The principles of effective reading as proposed by the author have an aura of dignity but not of secrecy about them. Dr. Adler's plan calls for three readings: one analytical or structural whose object is the discovery of a book's essential unity; a second which aims at synthesis, a notation of the new terms of the author, his principal propositions and arguments; a third, critical, wherein the reader determines whether and why he agrees or disagrees with the author. (It might be noted here that the chapters on criticism are the most pleasant, absorbing chapters in the book; Chapters XII and XIII, " The Etiquette of Talking Back," " The Things the Reader Can Say," are perhaps the most important for the *illiterati* just coming into their own.)

The three readings mentioned above need not be separate readings. At first it is quite necessary, according to the author, to read the book three times, but as the reader acquires proficiency, the first two readings can be telescoped into one. The third reading must follow the other two in time, for it is of utmost importance to determine whether the author has been understood before he can be criticized. " I don't know what you said, but I can't agree with you," is a fairly irrational but frequent comment. It should be remembered that it is impolite to burn a book, together with its author, before determining whether the author's heterodoxy is genuine or only fancied.

Another important and frequently overlooked matter in reading a book is what Dr. Adler calls " coming to terms " with the author. Certain words which the author charges with a new meaning for the purpose of more accurate expression of thought must be detected and interpreted for what they are worth. The number of these words is small, but their importance inestimable. Detecting the new words of the author in the second or interpretative reading is part of the process of understanding; and even though of paramount importance in grasping the content of the work it is not to be included in the first way of reading, whose primary function is the discovery of system and structure. The detection of key sentences and significant arguments is also part of the (second) interpretative reading.

The third part of the treatise will probably interest most readers, for it contains a fine essay on fictional reading and suggestions for reading lyric poetry, drama, epic, in addition to a stimulating little article on great books. The last chapter, " Free Minds and Free Men," slows down to a walk. Although the preceding two chapters radiate the author's personal energy, in

no way do they force the reader to run an exhausting dialectical trackmeet. In the third section the author proposes a method for intelligent reading and enjoyment of the great books, provides an objective basis for criticism, explains why it should no longer not be considered a felony to assert, "I don't know art, but I know what I like," or "Doesn't the allness of it do something to you?"

"To read books passively does not feed a mind; it makes blotting paper out of it" doubtlessly is true (p. 110). Even the mere accumulation of *species* in the intellect reduces a noble, active faculty to a passive, growing mass like a crystal, or, at its worst, a cancer. But at the same time an intellectual activity gastropodic in nature must suppress its omnivorous propensities for the same reason that the amoeba is selective in its feeding habits. Teleologically considered food to be food must really feed. Too often "food for thought" is quite as valueless from a nutritive standpoint as the delicacies of a banquet. The gourmet whose satisfaction consists in consuming the literary counterpart of dove's tongue and goose breast is at least as irrational as the gentleman nibbling at oris root and dog biscuit. Briefly stated, the obvious conclusion is, a discriminating individual will devote at least a minimum of attention to the quality of a victual that one day will become a part of him. The diet exclusively Keats, a critic once observed, is apt to produce the same jaundice got by living all one's life on wedding cake and cod-liver oil. Must the diet be balanced? Is not every food worthy of the stomach and every author worthy of the mind?

In the appendix of *How to Read a Book* is found a list of 131 authors, of which Homer, Cicero, Hegel, Guizot, Dostoievski, Mann, Bergson, Santayana, and Maritain are only a few. If, as it is presumed, there is truth in the writing of all these authors, how must it be obtained? Must their works be cut into small pieces, some of which are digested, others discarded, or must each be considered a system in itself internally consistent regardless of extrinsic consideration? When one reads Comte, Hegel, Mill, Bergson, James, Dewey, Santayana, and Maritain must one treat them as though each were vacuum packed in a tin, must some eclectic attempt be made at harmonization, or must one accept all these works on the basis of some standard?

In answer to this proposed difficulty let it be said that we have not advanced so far as to disregard the method employed by such universal geniuses as Aristotle and Saint Thomas. It is extremely significant that these masters familiarized themselves with the investigations and speculations of their predecessors and honestly attempted to arrive at an understanding of the positions maintained by their contemporaries and to solve syllogistically the difficulties proposed by them. The *Summa Theologica* serves as a splendid example in illustrating how a thinker can cultivate an acquaintance with foreign thought systems, scrutinize them for possible morsels of truth,

and call attention to the fact that unorthodox theories need not be entirely erroneous. Concerning the advisability of the varied diet, let it be remembered that one hardly derives therapeutic benefits from a remedy in the cabinet, or nourishment from an egg in the basket.

It does not seem to us that the author stresses sufficiently the importance of reading *this* book as distinct from reading *a* book. It is quite essential to secure not only an understanding of a problem and its solution, but also to recognize the significance of the author. This can be done only by knowing what the author expressed and what he implied. Dr. Adler has divided his treatment into a consideration of philosophical assumptions (pp. 278 ff.) and of the extrinsic aids in reading (pp. 285 ff.). Much of importance has been omitted by the author, perhaps because he regarded it as commonplace, but it has been thought well to include a few words concerning the importance of assumptions in the reading of an author.

The reader must learn to understand what the book says without distorting the contents by inferring what the author should say by reason of reputation as a Molinist, Fascist, or economist. The reader owes it to the author to seize what the author is attempting to express, and he should resist the temptation to supply for the author's apparent inarticulateness. He should never attribute to the author what the author did not say and did not intend to say, merely because certain conclusions can be inferred from certain premises, evidence, or principles. Authors are a sensitive lot of people and usually take exception to misinterpretation and misrepresentation.

Another serious reader's fault is the assumption that his knowledge is accurate and complete. This is the sheerest kind of prejudice. It is perhaps one of the greatest obstacles to the understanding of any author or any book, a species of blindness which only the most delicate, objective intellectual operation can correct.

Now the reader must discover the assumptions of the author: (1) those principles which the author accepts without proving, and (2) those principles the universality of whose acceptability the author has supposed. The maltreated, but most commonly known example of the first type is the shopworn Cartesian principle, "*Cogito, ergo sum.*" If the dictum be scrutinized it will be found to assume the truth of the principles of identity and contradiction, even though Descartes himself regarded it as basic.

The author may be perfectly frank with the reader and admit that he is assuming certain fundamentals, indemonstrables, definitions, and postulates, and then the reader's task consists only in the investigation of the validity of the assumed premises. If, however, the author has not declared his intention of basing his theory on a supposed, unproved premise, it is the duty of the reader to discover, if possible, whether any such assumption is demonstrable. It is illuminating to read through a book, perhaps a col-

lection of essays, and to note where the author has asserted something to be true which he has not troubled himself to prove. These unproved principles found hidden among the fairly inocuous *obiter dicta* frequently give the reader the greatest understanding of the thought of the writer.

Legion are the difficulties which follow the acceptance of unwarranted assumptions. The first and most obvious is the unconscious, almost pathetic acceptance of an author's error. Or worse, the reader frequently does literary violence to the author because he does not fully understand the starting point of the author. But the greatest criminal of all is the reader who mistakes his own philosophical vagueness and personal illiteracy for obfuscated thinking and inarticulateness on the part of the author.

The situation can be remedied only by securing an objective, accurate understanding of the author's message. Determine, as far as possible, the value of the author's work by judging from the point of view of his initial assumptions, the completeness and exactitude of his conclusions. This includes determining: (1) What the author did say; (2) what he did not say; (3) why he didn't say it. *a*) Did he deliberately conceal it? *b*) Did he know what he omitted? *c*) Is the solution arrived at by the author vitiated by any of the foregoing conditions 2 or 3a? *d*) Does the author realize the significance of what he might have said but omitted?

When considering what the author did say it is necessary for the reader to translate the work of the author into a language intelligible to himself. But when this has been completed it is only fair to review the words of the author in an attempt to discover whether there is any disparity between the words of the reader and the thought of the author. Some words mean only one thing, some things are represented by only one word, and therefore do not lend themselves readily to such facile interpretations. In struggling with such opaque media the necessity of insuring accuracy of thought transference is a primary consideration, for it must be remembered that although the thought of the author could be improved, the improvable mass must be known and distinguished from the improvements about to be registered by the reader. It is as important to know what the author has said as it is to know where the author has been deficient. But in pondering any object, the subject should know what part of the object belongs to the author, and for which part he himself is responsible. This is equally true in cases where the author has given the solutions only *in potentia*, premises which have not been exploited.

While agreeing whole-heartedly with Dr. Adler's main thesis your reviewer can hardly help noting that some of the most effective readers are poor prototypes from the standpoint of method. With the aid of an extremely powerful memory they manage somehow to capture the author's theme and variations, estimate his worth, determine the validity of his conclusions. They feel that most of the books on any one subject contain

about the same material, and about 10% of this book distinguishes it from any other in the same field; when the ten percent has been abstracted the reader knows that he knows this book as well as a zoologist knows one of his butterflies, because he knows its differences. He has discovered the significant differences, learned them, filed them on little slips of paper, but forever retains in his memory the results of his investigation.

Presumably *How to Read a Book* has been written for a different reader, one with a memory of modest proportions. His intellectual gleanings after several weeks of reading one of the 113 great authors will include an awareness that he has filled several quires of foolscap with notations; a few striking phrases; parts of an outline; the author's agreement or disagreement with the reader's personal prejudices; a few notations on the style; the thesis; several obvious, more or less traditional, criticisms levelled at the work. Dr. Adler is no visionary, for he realizes the difficulties involved in the acquisition of good reading habits; but he does think that men and women generally are capable of reading well. From the following bit of evidence (p. 14) your reviewer suspects that Dr. Adler is right:

> There is only one situation I can think of in which they almost pull themselves up by their bootstraps making an effort to read better than they usually do. When they are in love and are reading a love letter they read for all they are worth. They read every word three ways; they read between the lines and in the margins; they read the whole in terms of the parts, and each part in terms of the whole; they grow sensitive to context and ambiguity, to insinuation and implication; they perceive the color of words, the odor of phrases, and the weight of sentences. They may even take the punctuation into account. Then, if never before or after, they read.

JEROME P. LEDVINA

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*The Problem of Matter and Form in the "De Ente et Essentia" of Thomas Aquinas.* By John Goheen. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1940. Pp. 137, with index. $2.00.

The main thesis of this book is that the Thomistic doctrine of a real distinction between essence and existence is the necessary result of Aquinas' opposition to the notion of universal matter—a notion that found its most characteristic expression in the theory of spiritual matter as the principle of existence in pure spirits (the *intelligentiae*) and in the human soul. This theory was held by many of Thomas' predecessors and contemporaries and had eminent supporters in later times as well. Aquinas chose as the most prominent exponent of this theory, Avicebron whose *Fons vitae* supplies the proposition Aquinas criticized. Mr. Goheen, therefore, devotes his first chapter to an exposition of Avicebron's ideas as gathered from Baeumker's edition of the *Fons vitae*.

Parallel to the discussion of the question of spiritual matter runs another, which is indeed closely related to the first, namely, that of the relation and interpretation of matter and form. The author holds that the Aristotelian concept of form underwent, in the hands of Aquinas, some important alterations which too were necessitated by the latter's general principles. A third view of Aquinas is also correlated with these problems: his conception of potency and act is closely connected with his interpretation of the nature of the *formae separatae* and, accordingly, of the problem of universal matter.

These are indeed, as everyone understands, the three main problems of the *De ente* and, in a way, the fundamental themes of the grand symphony of the Thomistic system. This first work of Thomas is, in fact, a kind of program, an enunciation of the basic positions Thomas will hold forever. These fundamental themes are perhaps sounded nowhere in the writings of the great Schoolman with such impressive clarity as in the *De ente*, because here they are, as it were, studied isolatedly in themselves without much reference to the manifold implications which the larger treatises had to consider. An analysis of this work offers therefore a good, one might risk saying, the best, approach to an understanding of these principles of Thomism.

The succinctness, on the other hand, of Thomas' exposition in the *De ente* sometimes creates certain difficulties of interpretation, and it is always advisable to study the doctrine of this work in the light of the elucidating discussions to be found in the later writings of the master. Mr. Goheen, however, limits his study to the text of the *De ente*, as given in the edition of Roland-Gosselin. Reference is made twice to *De spiritualibus creaturis* and four times to the *Scriptum super I Sent.*; no mention is made of any of the later works. Nor did the author think it advisable to consult and quote some of the studies which have been made in recent years on the Thomistic philosophy of being, of matter and form, of potency and act. He refers, it is true, to P. Mandonnet's article "Les prèmieres disputations sur la distinction réele," but he does not mention Grabmann's study "Die Schrift 'De ente et de essentia' und die Seinsmetaphysik des heiligen Thomas von Aquin" (*Mittelalt. Geistesleben*. Vol. I. Munich: 1926. Pp. 314-334). Grabmann points out that the discussion of matter, form, and individualization became necessary because of the analysis of composite substances. It was not the refutation of Avicebron's conception that formed the main topic of the *De ente*; the criticism of this theory of universal matter followed incidentally from the larger plan of the treatise. P. Mandonnet, in his article "La théologie dans l'ordre des frères prêcheurs" (*Dict. Théol. Cath.*, VI, 879), has emphasized that the ontological problem was dominant in the thought of Aquinas, and that to understand his philosophy one has to share this point of view. This is already true of the *De ente*; the problem

of spiritual matter and, accordingly, the criticism of Avicebron, is only a partial aspect of the much greater problems Aquinas had in his mind.

The Neo-Scholastics always appreciate having a scholar not of their ranks turn to the study of medieval philosophy. This appreciation, however, cannot dispense them from examining critically every such contribution—not from a jealous desire to reserve to themselves the right of interpretation, but because, being necessarily better acquainted with the spirit of the great Scholastic masters, they are the more eager to have Scholastic philosophy understood in its fullness, and the more anxious to forestall misconceptions and misrepresentations. The study of medieval philosophy demands more than the enthusiasm, honesty, and industry of the scholar. It presupposes a great familiarity, for example, with medieval Latin. Mr. Goheen carefully gives the texts to which he refers so that his interpretation can be controlled by comparing it with the original statements. Some of the author's expressions are such as to give rise at least to misunderstandings. E. g.: *forma actu intelligibilis* is rendered by: the form itself is an active intelligible; *per formam significatur certitudo rei*: form signifies the constant essence of a thing; *quicquid non est de intellectu essentie . . . hoc est adueniens extra*: for whatever is not in the concept of essence . . . exists outside; to a passage of Avicebron, *materia non est privata absolute, quia habet esse in potentia* the author adds, in parenthesis, after *absolute* the remark: or absolute potentiality, whereas the meaning evidently is that prime matter has some, namely, potential being, and is not therefore absolutely nothing. Serious though such misinterpretations are, since they are apt to distort the real meaning of the original, they are comparatively insignificant; there are things which are worse. We read p. 118: "Thus we are forced to fall back on Aquinas' phrase that the soul shares its existence with a material thing, the body. That is, under the distinction between essence and existence, existence is conferred on an essence, which, although it forms 'a single composition' with the body, retains its independence with respect to the body." This astonishing sentence is allegedly another manner of stating what the text says: *Unde efficitur in tantum propinqua rebus materialibus ut res materialis trahatur ad participandum esse suum, ita scilicet, quod ex anima et corpore resultat unum esse in uno composito, quamvis illud esse prout est anime non sit dependens a corpore.* This passage is translated, quite correctly, on p. 117. How and why the author feels justified in giving it the interpretation quoted above remains unintelligible. This is, however, but one very striking illustration of the author's habit of interpreting very freely; the original meaning not infrequently gets lost. One reason for the rather confusing imprecision seems to be that the author does not distinguish with the necessary neatness the terms: *forma, essentia, natura.*

However, this book is a welcome sign of a growing interest in medieval

philosophy. It is also a welcome contribution insofar as it reports on passages in St. Augustine which have a definite relation to the problems discussed in the *De ente*. The reference to William of Auvergne is also of interest, though the position of this author needs some further clarification and cannot be understood without a previous study of his acquaintance with Avicenna, notwithstanding the valuable work of R. P. de Vaux (*L'Avicennisme Latin*, Bibl. Thom. XX. 1934). One wonders, for that matter, why Mr. Goheen did not consider the opinion of Avicenna who, in these years, influenced profoundly the mind of Aquinas. No doubt, some quite interesting remarks made by Mr. Goheen throw light on certain problems; but in spite of all these assets, this reviewer cannot but characterize this attempt at an interpretation of the *De ente* as unfortunate.

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*Catholics and Unbelievers in Eighteenth Century France.* By R. R. Palmer. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1939. Pp. 236. $4.00.

Much has been written on the *philosophes* who in the eighteenth century opposed the teachings of the Church and the traditional ideas. Diderot and Rousseau, Voltaire and Holbach, Helvetius and D'Alembert, together with some lesser minds, are well known; their opponents, the defenders of religion and of tradition, are practically unknown. But they are far from being unimportant or uninteresting. In fact, they deserve our attention not only because they attempted, in a time of declining faith, to uphold and to defend religion, but also because they did some efficient work as critics of their adversaries, pointing out the many inconsistencies in the latter's reasonings, and because they contributed more than is generally known to the development of western thought. Dr. Palmer is to be thanked for having given us so scholarly and informative a work on a subject hardly ever studied with the necessary thoroughness. His work has, however, a particular interest for anyone who feels interested in the history of ideas and in the connections existing between earlier times and those of our own days. Many ideas, indeed, which claim to be ultra-modern and of newest coinage appear to be rather old, to have been proposed, in fact, more than a century ago. It is quite exciting to notice how little the arguments of the anti-metaphysical and anti-religious mind change. There is apparently but little originality also in the most "original" ideas of the most modern authors. Sometimes, when following the arguments between the *philosophes* and the Catholics, one gets the impression that one is reading a translation of today's discussions into the language of the eighteenth century.

The situation of the Catholic theologians during the times studied by

Dr. Palmer is, however, complicated by the fact that they had to defend themselves against two enemies. There were the unbelieving *philosophes*, ranging from deists to outright materialists and atheists on the one hand, and there were the Jansenists on the other hand. As so often happens, the defenders were influenced by their enemies; but this influence was decidedly stronger when coming from the philosophers than when coming from the Jansenists. Notwithstanding the fact that even among the orthodox clergy there were several not unimportant personalities who showed a strong inclination towards Jansenism or who were, at least, not as antagonistic toward these heretics as the rest of the Catholic authors, but little of Jansenism penetrated into the thoughts of the Catholic theologians. However, they inserted into their own philosophy much of what was held by their philosophical adversaries. It is true that sometimes the similarity is merely apparent, because the same terms were given a different meaning. This is especially true of the notion of " nature," as Dr. Palmer very convincingly points out. But Catholic theology had incorporated quite a large bulk of rather unorthodox philosophy. The ideas of Descartes had made too deep an impression on all minds not to be influential also in the field of theological speculation. And with the reception of Cartesianism the door was opened to various philosophical conceptions which, judged by their true nature, ought to have been left outside.

In spite of the great number of quite capable minds among the Catholic theologians and of their willingness to defend the Faith, there was a definite decline in theological thought. Of this, there is a rather characteristic symptom. So far as one may gather from the statements of Dr. Palmer, the eighteenth century theologians no longer considered St. Thomas the main authority. No mention is made of his influence. This may be partly due to the fact that the Jansenists, in this rather like the Protestants, referred mainly to St. Augustine as their authority. Desirous of combatting them on their own field, the Catholic orthodox theologians followed the same custom. But in this too, we may discern the influence of Cartesianism. The extreme dualism taught by Descartes is compatible with Platonism or any philosophy containing a large share of Platonic elements; but Cartesianism is utterly incompatible with Aristotelian-Thomistic philosophy.

As Dr. Palmer is a historian, not a philosopher, his acquaintance with philosophical problems is the more astonishing. He fully appreciates the situation in which orthodoxy found itself involved. Though he sometimes seems to imply that the orthodox viewpoint has become untenable in modern times, he is not at all one of those authors who look down at theology as a deplorable error of bygone times, left behind by the progress of the moderns, and cultivated only by some few dull and stubborn minds. If Dr. Palmer is not simply on the side of orthodoxy, he is neither an admirer of the " enlightened " writers of the eighteenth century. He reveals clearly all their mistakes, their self-contradictions and lack of originality.

Not being a historian of philosophy, the author apparently takes occasionally as new and belonging just to the age he studies certain problems and certain solutions which in truth are centuries old. One point in which this becomes apparent is the much discussed question of *l'âme de bêtes*. It deserves to be mentioned particularly that Dr. Palmer emphasizes the ambiguity of the term *l'âme* and the misinterpretations that may arise by neglecting this ambiguity.

The book is divided according to the main problems which stood in the foreground of the discussions. An introductory chapter deals with The Conditions of Thinking and draws an exceedingly interesting picture of the general intellectual situation. The following chapters: Nature and Grace, History and Tradition, The Fact of Revelation, Some Modernizers, Soul and Mind, Creation and Causality, Obligation and Liberty, Nature Again, analyze with much understanding, with an enormous amount of learning and of original research, and with great clarity the position taken by the enemies of Faith or of the Church and the answers given by the Orthodox to these attacks.

If the Orthodox were influenced by the philosophers, it is equally true that the latter adopted a good many ideas they had learned from the theologians. It is difficult to know how far the philosophers were aware of this fact, which is a striking illustration of the impossibility of establishing a philosophy free from Christian elements after so many centuries of Christian civilization. Nor did the defenders of the Faith neglect to point out this circumstance to their adversaries. Also in this respect, Dr. Palmer's book is astonishingly actual though it deals with an age gone nearly two hundred years. It seems that history after all repeats itself, or that the period which began with the "enlightened" age in the middle of the eighteenth century is still developing.

The eighteenth century began as "the age of reason" and became soon an age of irrationalism. The orthodox Church tried to steer a middle course, to give reason its due and to save the supra-natural and supra-reasonable parts of Her teachings. Especially the Jesuits, who until their expulsion from France were the protagonists in all these discussions, "marked out large areas of life for the operation of reason, natural law, and free will, areas within which man was not really a fallen creature and in which original sin did not apply." Religion became a field outside and above reason. To prove its truth no appeal could be made to reason; stress was laid accordingly on historical proofs. This, however, involved the Catholic authors in great difficulties, since to distinguish the miracles and martyrdom of the faithful from the same facts related of infidels, the differentiating criterion had to be sought in the truth of the faith. Another field of controversy was the sensistic philosophy and psychology which was commonly accepted by the *philosophes*. Here the Orthodox proved to have a much clearer under-

standing of the human mind than the " progressive " scholars. Among the latter the idea of evolution with all its consequences regarding man's nature began to be adopted, and was vehemently opposed by the Catholic party. In ethics, the Orthodox were defenders of morality and very much opposed to the laxity of the infidels, though the majority of the theologians recoiled equally from the rigoristic ideas of the Jansenists. Furthermore, though some of the Jesuits were perhaps too willing to make concessions, there were some rather stern moralists in the Society of Jesus. The criticisms that the Orthodox put forth could not hold up the progress of " enlightenment " and all its consequences. But these criticisms were sensible and generally well founded. And the Catholic authors had a better understanding of what was going to result from this new spirit. Dr. Palmer is right in stating: " Could they all come back to life in the middle of the twentieth century, it would not be the conservatives who would be most surprised."

These conservatives were doubtlessly not as brilliant writers as Voltaire or Rousseau. They were at a disadvantage also because they defended old ideas in a time full of new sentiments, new developments, new prospects. But they do not deserve to be forgotten as they were by the usual history of philosophy and of civilization. Innovators are easily considered as great men, while their opponents are as easily decried as obscurantists. Seen from a greater distance, merits and demerits are more equally distributed. Much of the admiration lavished on the ideas of the Encyclopedists and their associates has to be discounted today; the figures of the men who, when these ideas were new and fascinating, saw and foresaw the true signification of the new mentality, become less shadowy and less unimportant than they seemed to be to many who either had not the knowledge of the facts or who were still blinded by the glamor of novelty. A forgotten generation of honest, clever, sharpsighted, though not really brilliant, men has come to life again in Dr. Palmer's book.

It would be unfair to the author and to the brilliant work he has done, if one were to raise some minor criticisms. Most of them would refer to his taking for original ideas of the age propositions which are of a much older origin. The Catholic philosopher might also object to one or the other interpretation Dr. Palmer gives. But, as a whole, his understanding of Catholic theology is rather amazing. The present reviewer can not close this inadequate report without referring particularly to the brilliancy of Dr. Palmer's style. His book is very delightful to read. It ought to be of interest to every student of the history of philosophy, to everyone interested in the history of civilization in general, and to everyone who desires to understand a little better some of the problems of our own days.

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